FULL 68 PAGES

AMAZING STORIES

Sinister TALES

APPROVED COMIC

No 61

IN THIS ISSUE...

THE DARTS OF DOOM...

SPEARS OF FLAME...

DAGGERS OF DEATH

and more

YES... YOU GUESSED IT... THE HOODED ONE IS BACK!

SHE HAD RULED AN ENTIRE EGYPTIAN EMPIRE THROUGH WITCHCRAFT AND FEAR... NOW THE CIVILIZED WORLD WAS AT HER MERCY! COULD THUNDERBOLT STOP PRINCESS EVILA, SORCERESS OF THE NILE?

THUNDERBOLT

SPECIAL CASE NUMBER 0002

THE EVIL THAT IS EVILA!

FROM THUNDERBOLT'S PERSONAL FILES

CREATED, WRITTEN, AND DRAWN, BY PAM

A-5518

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SINISTER TALES No. 61
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SYNOPSIS

IT IS AS IF IT WERE WRITTEN IN THE WIND, AS A LEGEND OF THE PAST, THE TIME WHEN THE AWESOME BLACK PLAGUE RULED THE HIMALAYAN REGION! MEN SUFFERED UNTO DEATH BEFORE ITS TERRIBLE SPREAD, AND ALL HOPE OF SURVIVAL RESTED WITH A SMALL MEDICAL TEAM, THAT HAD ARRIVED ON A MISSION OF HUMAN MERCY! YES, THERE WAS SICKNESS, AND THERE WAS DEATH, BUT FINALLY, THE PLAGUE WAS CONQUERED, CLAIMING ITS FINAL VICTIMS, DR. RICHARD AND MARY CANNON!

OUT OF FRIENDSHIP, AND GRATITUDE, THE HIGH ABBOT OF THE LAMASERY SAW TO THE UPBRINGING OF THE ORPHANED CHILD, AND DEVELOPED WITHIN HIM THE HIGHEST DEGREE OF MENTAL AND PHYSICAL PERFECTION! THEN, WHEN THE YOUTH CAME OF AGE, HE WAS ENTRUSTED WITH THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE *ANCIENT SCROLLS*, THAT BORE THE SECRET WRITINGS OF GENERATIONS OF WISE MEN! FROM THERE, HE LEARNED CONCENTRATION, MIND OVER MATTER, THE ART OF ACTIVATING AND HARNESSING THAT UNUSED PORTION OF THE BRAIN THAT MADE FANTASTIC FEATS POSSIBLE!

WHEN HIS STUDIES WERE COMPLETED, THE SCROLLS WERE DESTROYED! FOR, ANCIENT LAW HAD DECREED THAT ONLY ONE AMONGST HIS PEOPLE COULD POSSESS SUCH KNOWLEDGE, AND, ***PETER CANNON***, WAS THAT CHOSEN ONE! THERE WAS RESENTMENT, HOWEVER, ON THE PART OF THE ***HOODED ONE***, WHO HAD COVETED THE SCROLLS, AND PLOTTED AGAINST THE UNSUSPECTING YOUTH! SAD GOODBYES PRECEEDED THE JOURNEY TO AMERICA, WHERE PETER, ALONG WITH HIS FAITHFUL FRIEND TABU, SOUGHT OUT A NEW LIFE... THAT SOON REQUIRED THE EMERGENCE OF ***THUNDERBOLT!***

IN A SECLUDED LAMASERY IN THE HIMALAYAS, EVENTS ARE TAKING PLACE THAT WILL HAVE DIRE EFFECTS ON THE LIFE OF PETER CANNON-THUNDERBOLT!
WE HAVE REACHED OUR DECISION, HOODED ONE!
FOR YOUR PAST ACTS OF GREED, HATRED, AND REVENGE, THIS COUNCIL FINDS YOU GUILTY OF VIOLATING OUR MOST SACRED LAWS! HAVE YOU ANYTHING TO SAY, BEFORE WE RULE UPON YOUR FATE?

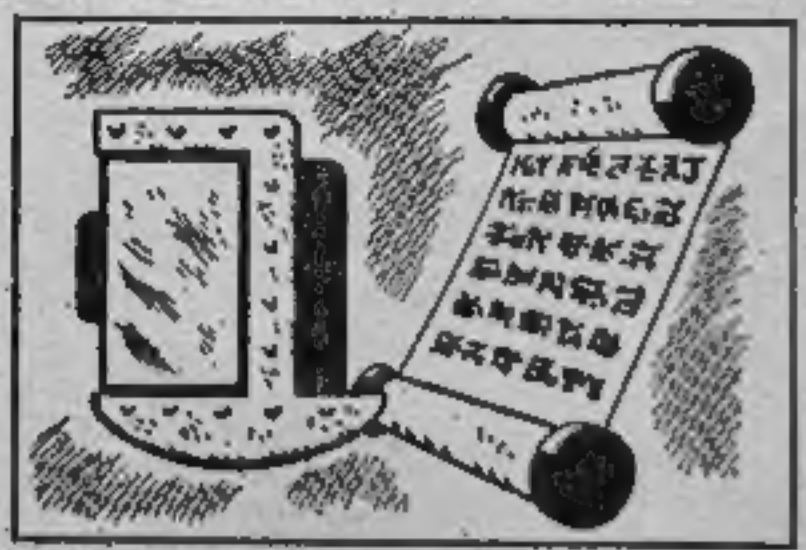
MY FATE, HA! SURELY YOU JEST, HIGH ABBOT! THAT WAS DECIDED YEARS AGO, WHEN MY STUDIES OF THE ANCIENT SCROLLS WERE HALTED, SO THAT ONE OF FOREIGN BIRTH COULD MASTER THEM!
YOU SPEAK OF ONE WHOSE PARENTS SACRIFICED THEIR LIVES FOR OUR PEOPLE!
YES, I SPEAK TOO, OF MY SACRIFICE! ARE THE HAPPENINGS OF THE PAST SO DISTANT THAT YOU RECALL NOT WHY I WEAR THIS HOOD, AND WHY I STAND BEFORE YOU NOW, AS ONE WITH BUT HALF A FACE?

YOUR DEED SHALL NEVER BE FORGOTTEN, HOODED ONE, AND BECAUSE OF IT, THIS COUNCIL HAS SEEN FIT TO SPARE YOUR LIFE! HOWEVER, YOUR CRIMES CANNOT GO UNPUNISHED! SO, IT IS OUR DUTY TO DECREE, THAT HENCEFORTH, YOU BE BANISHED FROM THIS LAMASERY, FOREVER!

SO BE IT! I WILL LEAVE HERE, BUT NOT WITHOUT PURPOSE! THE CIVILIZED WORLD THAT CAUSED MY DISFIGUREMENT, AND PETER CANNON, WHO ROBBED ME OF GREATNESS, SHALL KNOW MY WRATH!

IT WAS THE TIME OF WAR BETWEEN CIVILIZATIONS, WHEN I WAS A STUDENT AT THE LAMASERY, THAT HAD BECOME A REFUGE FOR THE SICK AND HELPLESS! THE ACTUAL FIGHTING HAD PASSED US BY, BUT ONE DAY, AN IRON BIRD FALTERED IN THE SKY, AND CRASHED IN THE LAMASERY YARD! THE PILOT WAS KILLED, BUT, WE HAD BEEN SPARED DISASTER, OR SO WE THOUGHT! THE FLAMES SOON REVEALED THE AWFUL TRUTH, IN THE FORM OF AN UNDETONATED BOMB, THAT LEFT BUT ONE DESPERATE COURSE OF ACTION POSSIBLE...

THE TERRIBLE PAIN OF SEARING HEAT ATE AT MY VERY BEING, BUT SOMEHOW, I CARRIED THE MISSILE TO SAFETY! THEN, THERE WAS UNCONSIOUSNESS, FOR THE INFERNO HAD CLAIMED PART OF MY FACE, AND ONLY A CRUDE METAL ATTACHMENT SAVED MY LIFE! FOR MY SACRIFICE, I WAS ALLOWED THE PARTIAL STUDY OF THE ANCIENT SCROLLS, AND THE HONOR OF BEING CONSIDERED, WHEN A CHOSEN ONE WAS FINALLY NAMED! HOWEVER, THAT HONOR NEVER CAME! FOR, THE LATER SACRIFICE OF DR. RICHARD AND MARY CANNON WAS DEEMED GREATER THAN MINE, AND THE SCROLLS WERE ENTRUSTED TO THEIR SON, PETER!



BAH! IT IS USELESS TO DWELL UPON THOUGHTS OF THE PAST, WHEN THE PRESENT THREATENS ME WITH EXTINCTION! THE SECRET ICE CAVE I DISCOVERED YEARS AGO WILL OFFER ME SHELTER!
GREETINGS, MY FROZEN PETS, I RETURN AMONGST YOU ONCE AGAIN! THE FOOD AND SUPPLIES I STORED HERE IN ANTICIPATION OF THIS DAY, WILL SUFFICE MY NEEDS. FOR THIS CAVE, WITH ITS SUBTERRANEAN VOLCANIC TURMOIL, WILL BE MY NEW HOME!

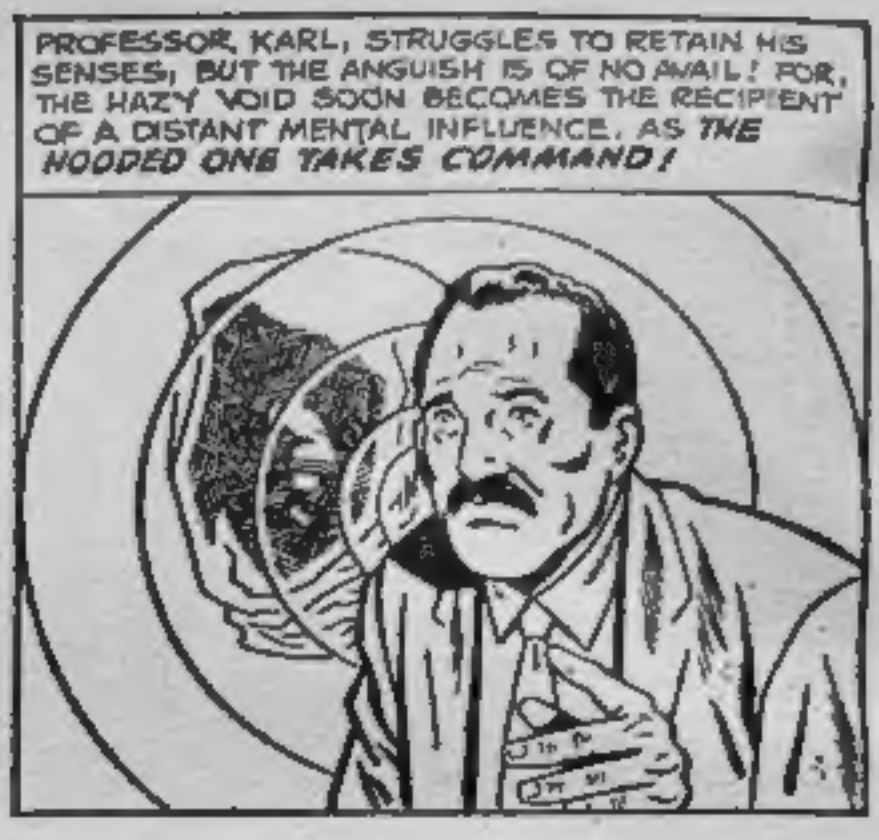
SO, AS THE BLIZZARD ROARS WITH DEMONIC FURY AND RIDES THE SCREAMING WIND, THE HOODED ONE PONDERS OVER THOUGHTS OF EVIL, WHICH WAX MACABRE THROUGH A TWISTED BRAIN!
NOW, PETER CANNON... THUNDERBOLT, I'M READY FOR YOU!

THE ANCIENT SCROLLS THAT CONTAINED WORDS OF KNOWLEDGE AND POWER, ALSO SERVED TO RECORD THE HISTORY OF MANKIND! ONE SUCH SCROLL, WHICH I SECRETED BEFORE MY STUDIES WERE HALTED, TELLS IN DETAIL OF THE LIFE OF PRINCESS EVILA, SORCERESS OF THE NILE!

SHE RULED AN ENTIRE EGYPTAIN EMPIRE THROUGH WITCHCRAFT AND FEAR, AND SOUGHT EVEN GREATER CONQUESTS! HER DARK POWER WAS SUCH, THAT SHE EVEN MADE CLAIM TO IMMORTALITY! FINALLY, SHE WAS PUT TO DEATH, AND BURIED IN AN UNMARKED TOMB, AND FORGOTTEN IN TIME!

THAT TOMB, HAS SINCE BEEN DISCOVERED, AND THE MUMMY OF PRINCESS EVILA RESTS EVEN, NOW, IN AN AMERICAN MUSEUM! HOWEVER, SHE WILL LIVE AGAIN! I MUST CONCENTRATE... MUST PROJECT MY WILL! I MUST MAKE CONTACT, THROUGH MENTAL TELEPATHY, WITH ONE DIRECTLY CONCERNED!

EDITOR'S NOTE: DAN GARRETT KNOWN TO OUR READERS ALSO AS THE ***BLUE BEETLE!***



THEN, THE IMPOSSIBLE BECOMES A REALITY, AS THE MUMMY OF A BYGONE ERA BEGINS TO TAKE FORM! THERE IS BREATHING, DIFFICULT AT FIRST, BUT RYTHMIC AND CONSTANT! THERE IS MOVEMENT... THERE IS AWARENESS... AND, THERE IS LIFE! PRINCESS EVILA, SORCERESS OF THE NILE, *LIVES AGAIN!*

PROFESSOR KARL NO LONGER FEELS THE PAIN IN HIS HEAD, OR THE STRANGE INFLUENCE OF ANOTHER BEING! THE BLANK SENSATION IS GONE, BUT THE RESULT OF HIS MOMENTARY LAPSE, IS STILL VERY MUCH WITH HIM...
THIS...THIS IS INCREDIBLE! WHAT HAVE I DONE?

YOU HAVE RESTORED MY LIFE, OLD ONE, IN RETURN FOR WHICH, I NOW OFFER YOU THE PRIVILEGE OF SERVING ME! TEACH ME THE WAYS OF YOUR CIVILIZATION, SO THAT I MAY ONCE AGAIN REIGN AS PRINCESS, OVER ALL MANKIND!
NO! THIS IS MADNESS. IT... IT'S SOME KIND OF MADNESS!

SO BE IT! YOU WILL OBEY MY COMMANDS, REGARDLESS OF YOUR WISHES! LOOK DEEP INTO MY EYES...DEEPER...DEEPER! WE WILL LEAVE THIS PLACE, AND MAKE PREPARATIONS FOR MY RETURN TO POWER...
I...I...WILL OBEY!

DAYS LATER, NEWS OF PROFESSOR KARL'S DISAPPEARANCE, DRAWS THE ATTENTION OF THE SOLE INHABITANTS OF A HILLTOP MANSION!
HMMM, ODD COINCIDENCE! DID YOU READ THIS, TABU?
YES, FRIEND PETER! IT IS THE ONE YOU MET RECENTLY!
DAILY VIEW
PROF. KARL MISSING
ONLY EMPTY MUMMY CASE AND WRAPPINGS FOUND!

THE PRESS IS CLAIMING THAT PROF. KARL DISAPPEARED, IN ORDER TO SAVE EMBARRASSMENT OVER HIS LATEST SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY, WHICH TURNED OUT TO BE NOTHING MORE THAN AN EMPTY SARCOPHAGUS!
IS IT NOT SO, THAT MUMMY WRAPPINGS COME NOT, WITH AN EMPTY SARCOPHAGUS!

EXACTLY WHAT I WAS THINKING, TABU! I'M SURE THE POLICE WILL COME UP WITH A MORE LOGICAL EXPLANATION FOR ALL THIS!
PERHAPS THE EXPLANATION LIES IN THE MARKINGS, FOUND ON THE SARCOPHAGUS OF PRINCESS EVILA!

THAT'S THE ONE THING THAT THROWS ME, OLD BUDDY! IF PRINCESS EVILA DID EXIST, SHE WOULD'VE BEEN MENTIONED IN THE ANCIENT SCROLLS... AND I DON'T REMEMBER READING ABOUT HER...
IS THERE NOT ONE OTHER, WHO ALSO HAD ACCESS TO THEM, FRIEND PETER?

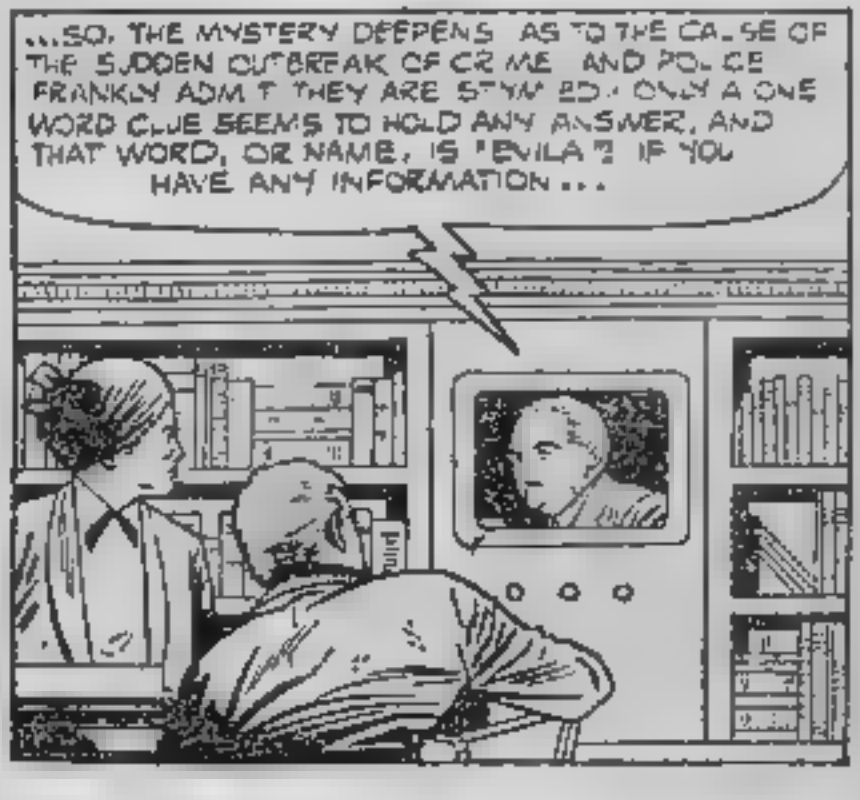
YOU MEAN *THE HOODED ONE?* UMMM, YOU'RE RIGHT, OF COURSE, BUT I CAN'T SEE ANY CONNECTION BETWEEN THE TWO! NO, IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE! GUESS WE'LL JUST HAVE TO WAIT AND SEE...
WHY DO YOU NOT PURSUE THE MATTER FURTHER, AS ONE CALLED *THUNDERBOLT?*

NO THANKS, CHUM! I DON'T WANT ANY PART OF CIVILIZATION, OR ITS PROBLEMS! I'VE GOT AN INTERESTING JOB, AND PLENTY OF SECLUSION, AND I WANT TO KEEP IT THAT WAY! NOW, HOW ABOUT TRADING THESE GLOVES IN FOR A KARATE PAD?
I AWAIT YOUR PLEASURE, FRIEND PETER, WHENEVER YOU FEEL LUCKY!

SO, AS SEEMINGLY UNEVENTFUL WEEKS PASS, A STRANGE UNDERWORLD MIGRATION TAKES PLACE, AS THIEVES, BURGLARS, AND CRIMINALS OF EVERY TYPE AND DESCRIPTION, HEAD FOR A MOUNTAIN HIDEAWAY! FOR, THE WORD IS OUT, A NEW CRIMINAL EMPIRE IS FORMING, AND THE LURE IS PLUNDER...

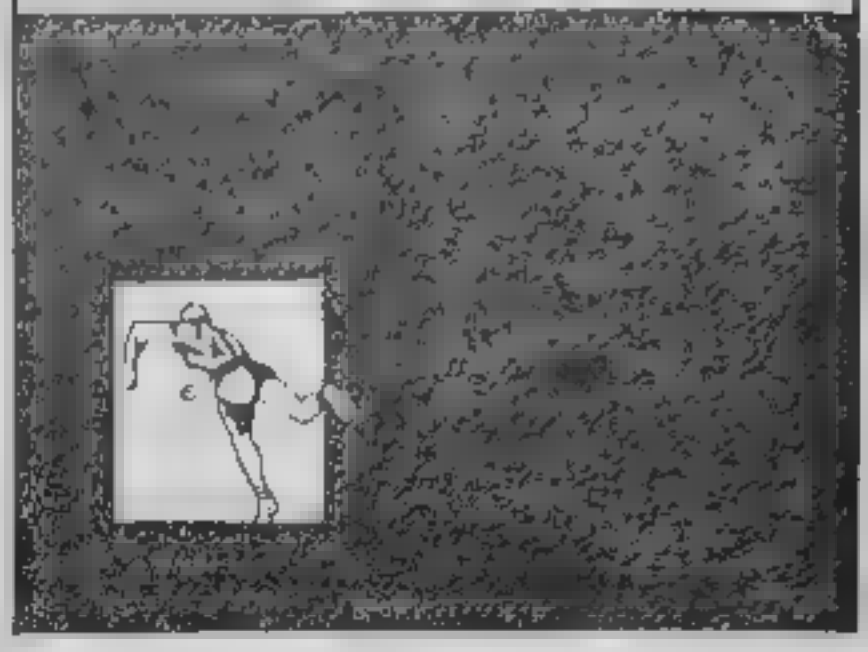
HOWEVER, AS IN ALL NEFARIOUS SCHEMES, THE LURE IS BUT BAIT TO ATTRACT THE UNWARY! FOR, PRINCESS EVILA, SORCERESS OF THE NILE, MEANS ONLY TO STOCK HER CRIMINAL EMPIRE WITH *SLAVES!*
YOU ARE ALL UNDER MY INFLUENCE, AND YOU WILL OBEY MY COMMANDS! THE FIRST STEP TOWARD POWER IS MONEY, AND I MUST HAVE THAT TO ACHIEVE MY GOAL! TONIGHT WE WILL BEGIN! NOW, GO TO YOUR POSITIONS!
WE WILL OBEY!

THE VIOLENT OUTBURST OF CRIME THAT FOLLOWS, HAS NO EQUAL. AS THE STEEL AND CONCRETE ARENA THAT IS NEW YORK CITY, TURNS INTO A JUNGLE OF FEAR! THE NIGHTS GIVE WAY TO SCENES OF BATTLE, AS POLICE EMERGENCY UNITS MAINTAIN A CONSTANT VIGIL, IN AN ATTEMPT TO HALT THE RUTHLESS ONSLAUGHT, THAT SEEMS ONLY TO GROW IN INTENSITY!



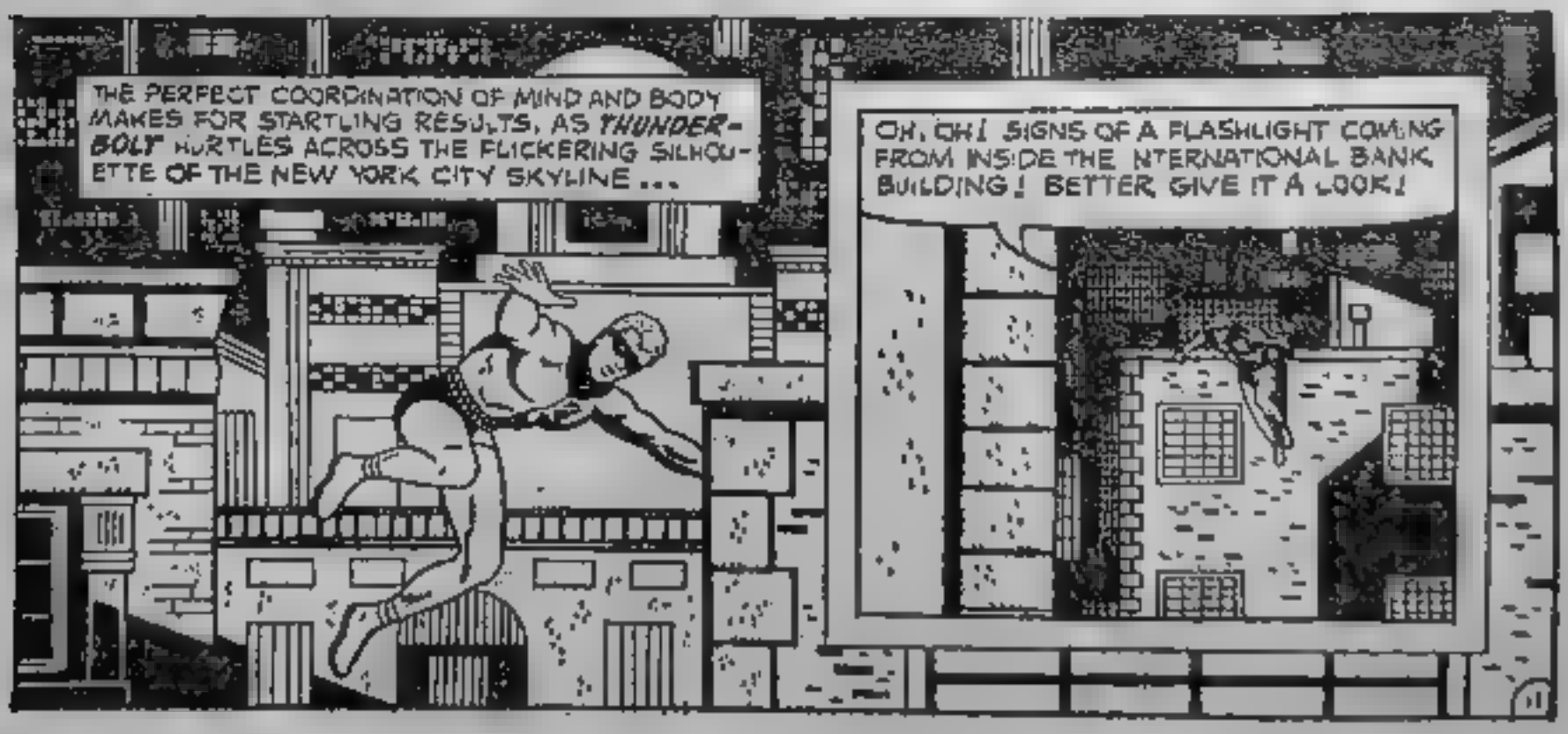
SO, MOMENTS LATER, IN THE PRIVACY OF A SECRET ROOM A TRANSFORMATION TAKES PLACE, AS SINEWY MUSCLES ONCE AGAIN FEEL THE EN-WRAPMENT OF FAMILIAR GARMENTS OF THE PAST! SOON... A PANTHER-LIKE FIGURE STANDS READY, IN THE FORM OF PETER CANNON... *THUNDERBOLT!*

A SILENT GOODBYE PRECEEDS THE RAPID MOVEMENT THAT TAKES *THUNDERBOLT* PAST A SECRET PANEL WALL AND INTO A MAZE OF INTERCONNECTING TUNNELS, THAT LEAD HIM TO EXITS AWAY FROM THE ANCIENT HILLTOP MANSION...



HMMM... POLICE PATROLS! I'LL NEVER GET BY THEM IN THIS OUTFIT! STILL, I'VE GOT TO CHECK THE PLACES WHERE PRINCESS EVILA IS LIKELY TO STRIKE! GUESS I'LL HAVE TO TRY ANOTHER MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION!

THE PERFECT COORDINATION OF MIND AND BODY MAKES FOR STARTLING RESULTS, AS *THUNDERBOLT* HURTLES ACROSS THE FLICKERING SILHOUETTE OF THE NEW YORK CITY SKYLINE...



A DARING LEAP CARRIES THUNDERBOLT CLOSER TO HIS OBJECTIVE...
GOOD THING MY MENTAL AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT WAS STARTED AT AN EARLY AGE! I'D HATE TO BE A BEGINNER AT THIS SORT OF THING!
HMMM... FOUR OF THEM! ODDS ARE RIGHT ENOUGH ESPECIALLY WITH THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE GOING FOR ME! GOT TO SCATTER THEM SO THAT THEY'LL LEAD ME TO THEIR HIDEOUT... AND PRINCESS EVILA!

THEN, SUDDENLY, THE SILENCE OF THE NIGHT IS BROKEN AS THE CRASHING SOUND OF SHATTERING GLASS, JOLTS FORTH A RESOUNDING ECHO! A HAZY STREAKING OF RED AND BLUE, COMBINES WITH THE BURSTING VIBRATION OF IMPACT, AND EFFECTS AN ATMOSPHERE OF INSTANT CHAOS!
EVILA!?!
EVILA!?!
EVILA!?!

THE REPITITION OF SPEECH, THE BLANK STARES... ALL ADD UP! NOW I KNOW WHY THE POLICE COULDN'T GET ANY INFORMATION OUT OF THEIR PRISONERS... THEY WERE ALL HYPNOTIZED!

LOOKS LIKE MY LITTLE PLAN IS WORKING! THREE DOWN, AND ONE ON THE RUN: I'LL GIVE HIM JUST ENOUGH HEAD START TO KEEP THINGS INTERESTING! DON'T WANT HIM TO FIGURE THIS AS A SET-UP!

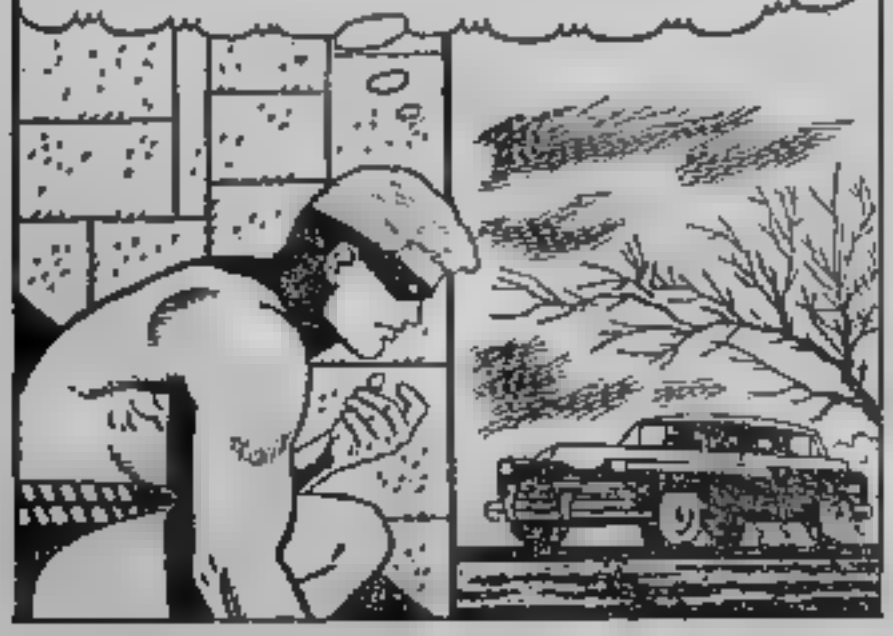
A WAITING CAR AND A RUNNING MOTOR TRIGGERS A HASTY DEPARTURE AS THUNDERBOLT BECOMES A LAST MINUTE PASSENGER ON HIS WAY TO PRINCESS EVILA SORCERESS OF THE NILE.

THAT'S IT BUSTER ... HEAD FOR HOME

A HOUR LATER WELL INTO THE MOUNTAIN AREA OF SUBURBIA SHIMMERING MOON BEAMS PICK UP A LONE VEHICLE THAT APPROACHES ITS DESTINATION.

CAR SLOWING DOWN ... GUESS THIS IS THE BETTER HOLD OFF AND LOOK AROUND ... NO SENSE IN PRESSING MY LUCK!

MORE CARS ... SOMETHING'S GOING ON INSIDE! NO GUARDS AROUND ... GOOD! GOT TO GET IN CLOSER ... SEE WHAT'S WHAT! BETTER TAKE IT EASY ... NO TELLING WHAT I'M LIABLE TO RUN INTO!



THUNDERBOLT STEPS CAUTIOUSLY SLOWLY INTO UNFAMILIAR SURROUNDINGS AS AN EERIE CHANT DRIFTS THROUGH THE OTHERWISE SILENT CORRIDORS. THEN, VOICES BECOME AUDIBLE AND TAKE FORM AS THEIR REPETITIOUS CONTENT GROWS LOUDER IN VOLUME ***EVILA! EVILA! EVILA!***

SILENCE, YOU FOOLS! I WANT NOT YOUR ACCLAIM ... ONLY YOUR PLUNDER! MAKE YOUR REPORTS! ***SPEAK, I COMMAND YOU!***

THE ARMORED TRUCK ROBBERY WAS SUCCESSFUL, PRINCESS EVILA!

THE PARKER DIAMOND THEFT WAS SUCCESSFUL PRINCESS EVILA!

THE ACME PAYROLL HOLDUP WAS SUCCESSFUL PRINCESS EVILA!

THEN, THUNDERBOLT STEPS FROM THE SHADOWS, HIS FACE, A GRIM, SEETHING MASK, THAT STARES THROUGH COLD STEEL-LIKE EYES, WITH A WRATH THAT IS TERRIBLE TO BEHOLD!

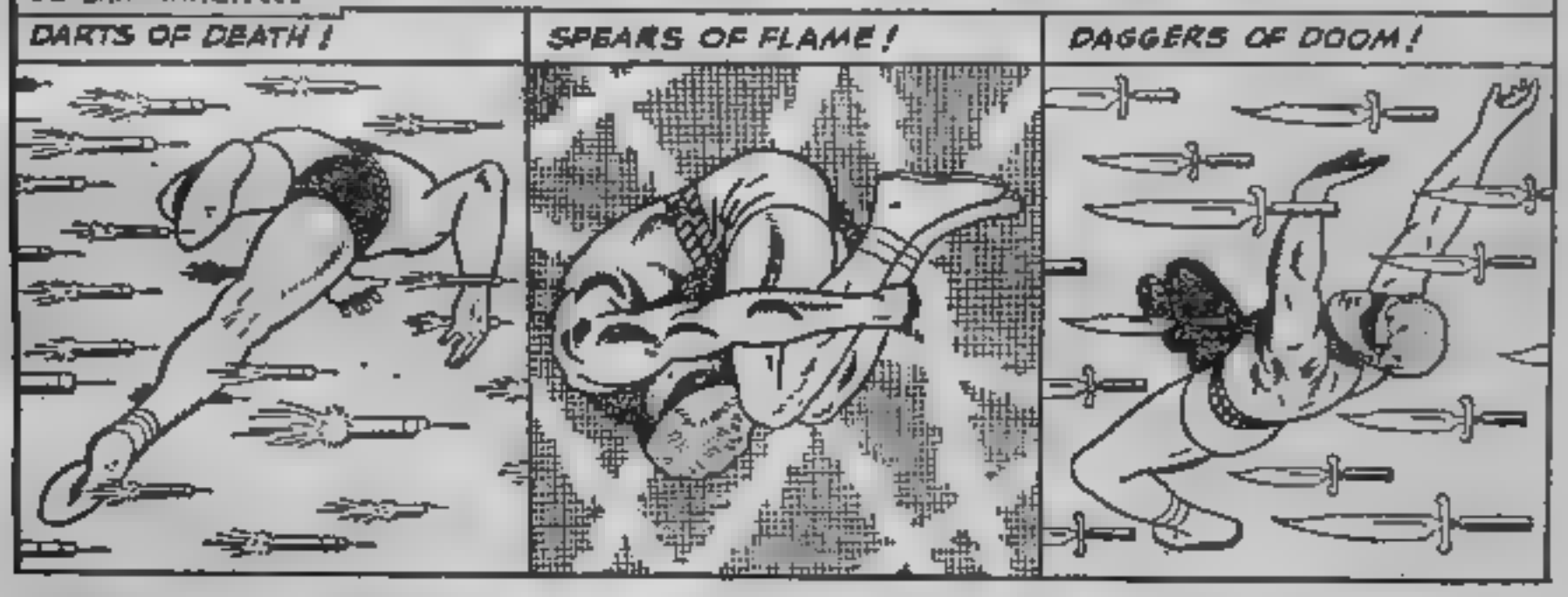
COME AHEAD, YOU DEVILS, DO YOUR MISTRESS BIDDING! I'M READY FOR YOU!
THUNDERBOLT MOVES WITH THE FRENZY OF A SNAPPING WHIPLASH, AND TEARS INTO HIS ATTACKERS, WITH A FURY BORN OF RIGHTEOUS WRATH! SPRAWLING FIGURES ARE EVERYWHERE AS THE TERRIFIC IMPACT OF BATTLE, CONJOINS WITH THE OBLIVIOUS VOID, THAT IS UNCONSCIOUSNESS!

THE FORCES OF EVILA ARE MANY, HOWEVER, AND HER OBEDIENT SLAVES CONTINUE TO PRESS FORWARD, HEEDLESS OF THE PERIL THAT LASHES OUT, WITH BEWILDERING SUDDENNESS THEIR UNQUESTIONING ADHERENCE TO A GIVEN COMMAND, MAKE THEM LITTLE MORE THAN LIVING ROBOTS...

SOON THE MASS OF HUMAN FORMS ENGULF THE MIGHTY THUNDERBOLT AND SHEER WEIGHT OF NUMBERS FORCE HIM BACK... BACK... BACK!
CAN'T LET THEM TAKE ME... GOT TO FIGHT THEM OFF! I CAN DO IT... I MUST DO IT...
I WILL DO IT!

THEN IN A DISPLAY OF POWER SO TREMENDOUS, AS TO DEFY DESCRIPTION, THUNDERBOLT RIPS LOOSE, AS HIS MAGNIFICENT BODY RESPONDS COMPLETELY TO HIS WILL! SINEWY MUSCLES, BECOME AS STEEL, AS PERFECT REFLEXES, COORDINATION, AND TIMING, RECOIL THE MASSIVE ASSAULT...

THEN IT BEGINS AS THUNDERBOLT ENTERS THE CORRIDOR OF DOOM! DIABOLICAL TRAPS BRUTAL IN CONCEPT, AND DEATHLY IN INTENT, SEEK TO CLAIM THE ELUSIVE FIGURE, THAT MOVES, WITH PURPOSEFUL DETERMINATION...



THUNDERBOLT HURTLES DOWNWARD; INTO A POOL, AND PLUNGES DEEP BENEATH THE MURKY WATERS, THAT BREAK HIS FALL! THEN, HIS SENSES DESERT HIM MOMENTARILY, BUT RETURN IN TIME, TO WARN HIM OF AN IMPENDING DANGER ..

EVERYTHING'S SPINNING... SOMETHING'S COMING AT ME ..CROCODILE!

A DEFT, TWISTING MOVEMENT, AND THUNDERBOLT TEMPORARILY AVOIDS THE GAPING JAWS OF DEATH.

ONLY ONE CHANCE... HAVE TO MOVE FAST! MUST GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THE POOL... GOT TO GET SOME LEVERAGE!

THAT'S IT, C'MON DOWN AFTER ME ..THE ODDS ARE IN YOUR FAVOR! CLOSER... CLOSER... JUST A LITTLE BIT MORE!

THEN, IN A SUDDEN DESPERATE ACTION, THUNDERBOLT MAKES HIS MOVE, AND THE DARK CHURNING WATERS, BECOME A WHIRLPOOL OF BATTLE! MAN AND SAURIAN VIE FOR POSITION, AS THE SILENT STRUGGLE LASTS AN ETERNITY OF MINUTES. UNTIL FINALLY, THE VICTIM BECOMES THE VICTOR..

PHYSICAL STAMINA AND ENDURANCE, CAN TAKE NO MORE AS BURSTING LUNGS SEND THROBBING IMPULSES TO THE BRAIN! ONLY ONE HOPE REMAINS, FOR ONE RECKLESS ACT OF SURVIVAL, AS THUNDERBOLT CROUCHES MOMENTARILY, THEN LUNGES UPWARD, WITH ALL OF HIS REMAINING STRENGTH...

MOMENTUM, BORN OF A STRAINING, WRITHING, PHYSIQUE, CARRIES THUNDERBOLT PAST THE WATER'S CREST, AND THROUGH THE TRAP DOOR ENCLOSURE!

WHA? NO, THIS CANNOT BE! NO ONE CAN SURVIVE THE CROCODILE POOL! WHAT MANNER OF MORTAL ARE YOU?

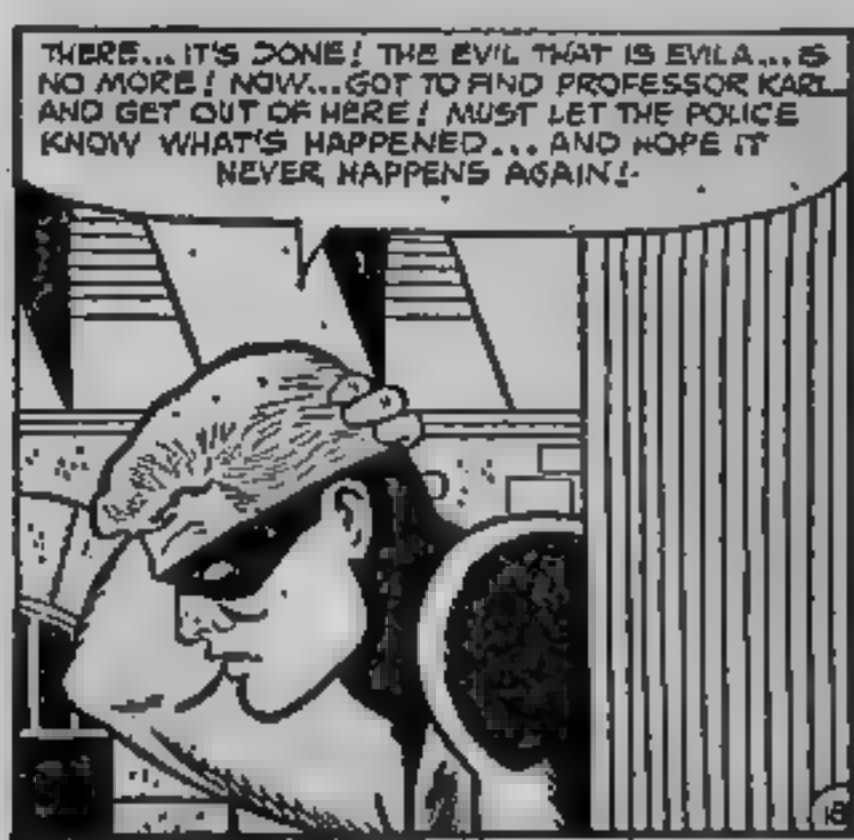
THE MANNER OF MORTAL... THAT'S GOING TO SEE THE EVIL YOU REPRESENT... DESTROYED!
HA HA HA! YOU SPEAK BRAVE WORDS, BUT NO LONGER HAVE THE STRENGTH TO CARRY THEM OUT! YOU ARE IN MY POWER, AND AT MY MERCY, AND WILL SUFFER THE FATE OF OTHERS...

NOW, HANDSOME ONE, LOOK DEEP INTO MY EYES, AND SEARCH OUT YOUR COURSE! DEEPER... DEEPER...SOON YOU WILL BE AS NOTHING, A HUMAN SHELL, DEVOID OF SENSES, FEELINGS, AND EMOTIONS! LOOK DEEPER... AND ACCEPT YOUR DESTINY!

FEEL WEAK... TIRED! HER POWER OF WILL IS AS STRONG AS MINE! I CAN FEEL HER THOUGHTS... EATING INTO MY BRAIN! HAVE TO FIGHT BACK... CAN'T LET IT END LIKE THIS! I CAN DO IT... I MUST DO IT... I WILL DO IT!

THEN, AN AWESOME BATTLE OF WILL TAKES PLACE, AS THUNDERBOLT REACHES INTO THE VERY DEPTHS OF HIS BEING, TO MUSTER THE FORCES OF CONCENTRATION AT HIS COMMAND! WIDE EYES STARE FIXEDLY, AND THERE IS NO TURNING BACK, FOR THIS IS A FIGHT TO THE FINISH!

MINUTES TICK INTO HOURS AS THE UNEARTHLY SILENCE ONLY ADDS TO THE STRAINING PRESSURE, THAT CAN LAST NO LONGER! THUNDERBOLT BEGINS TO CRACK... BUT THE SCREAM OF DEFEAT, COMES NOT FROM HIS LIPS...
YAAAAEEEEEEEEE!


THERE... IT'S DONE! THE EVIL THAT IS EVILA... IS NO MORE! NOW... GOT TO FIND PROFESSOR KARL AND GET OUT OF HERE! MUST LET THE POLICE KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENED... AND HOPE IT NEVER HAPPENS AGAIN!

PROFESSOR KARL! YOU'RE ALIVE! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
I...I AM NOW! QUITE SUDDENLY, MY SENSES HAVE RETURNED! I CAN THINK AGAIN! WHO ARE YOU? WHAT'S HAPPENED HERE? WHERE'S PRINCESS EVILA? SHE MUST BE STOPPED!

SHE HAS BEEN STOPPED, PROFESSOR! YOU NEEDN'T WORRY ABOUT HER ANYMORE! SHE'S...OVER THERE! YOU CAN TAKE HER WITH US IF YOU LIKE, WE'VE GOT TO GET MOVING!
GOOD GRACIOUS! SHE'S TURNED BACK INTO A MUMMY AGAIN!

MOMENTS LATER, THUNDERBOLT, PROFESSOR KARL, AND THE MUMMY OF PRINCESS EVILA, ARE IN A FAST MOVING VEHICLE, THAT CARRIES THEM AWAY FROM THE MOUNTAIN RETREAT! THEN SUDDENLY, THERE IS AN EXPLOSION, SO TREMENDOUS IN SCOPE, THAT IT VIBRATES FOR MILES AROUND...AND THE SECRET HIDEAWAY IS NO MORE...

I...I FORGOT! PRINCESS EVILA HAD SOME SORT OF TIME CLOCK ARRANGEMENT, ATTACHED TO TONS OF DYNAMITE, THAT HAD TO BE SET EVERY DAY! IT WAS DESIGNED AS A TRAP, IN CASE THE HIDEAWAY WAS CAPTURED!
MAYBE IT'S BETTER THIS WAY...FOR ALL CONCERNED!

THE FOLLOWING DAY, HEADLINES TELL THE WHOLE INCREDIBLE STORY...
DAILY REVIEW
PROF. KARL SAFE!
STAR-TRIBUNE
-PRINCESS EVILA- HER LIFE AND DEATH!
THUNDERBOLT TRIUMPHS AGAIN!!!

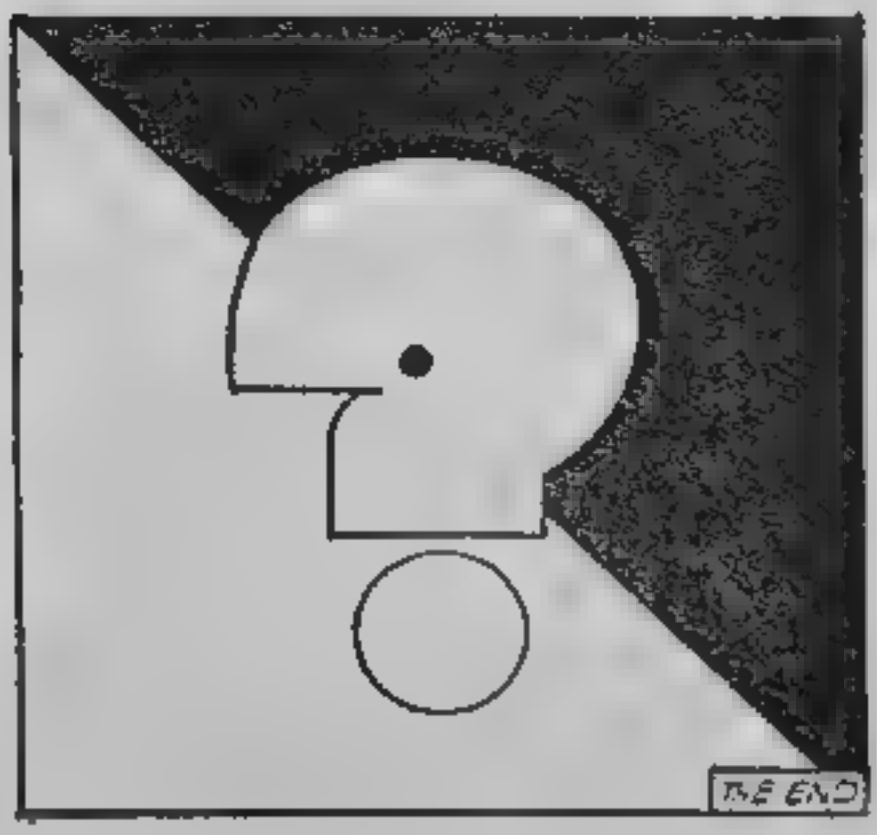
ONCE AGAIN, THE NEWS REACHES A SECRET ICE-CAVE HIGH IN THE HIMALAYAS ..
...WAS DESTROYED, AND THE MUMMY OF PRINCESS EVILA HAS BEEN RETURNED!
SO, THUNDERBOLT, YOU'VE THWARTED MY PLANS AGAIN! THINGS WILL BE DIFFERENT WHEN WE MEET FACE TO FACE

MEANWHILE, A SIMILAR TOPIC IS UNDER DISCUSSION IN A HILLTOP MANSION...
WHAT OF THE HOODED ONE, FRIEND PETER? HAVE YOU ANY PLANS FOR HIM?
NO, TABU! THERE'S NO ACTUAL PROOF AGAINST HIM! IN ANY EVENT, WITH EVILA GONE, HIS POWER IS NO MORE!

WHAT OF THE PRINCESS EVILA, AND HER CLAIM TO IMMORTALITY?
SHE WAS A SORCERESS STEEPED IN THE STUDIES OF THE BLACK ARTS! SOMEWHERE ALONG THE LINE, SHE DISCOVERED A LIFE RESTORING SERUM THAT SHE SECRETED ON HER PERSON, AT THE TIME OF HER DEATH!

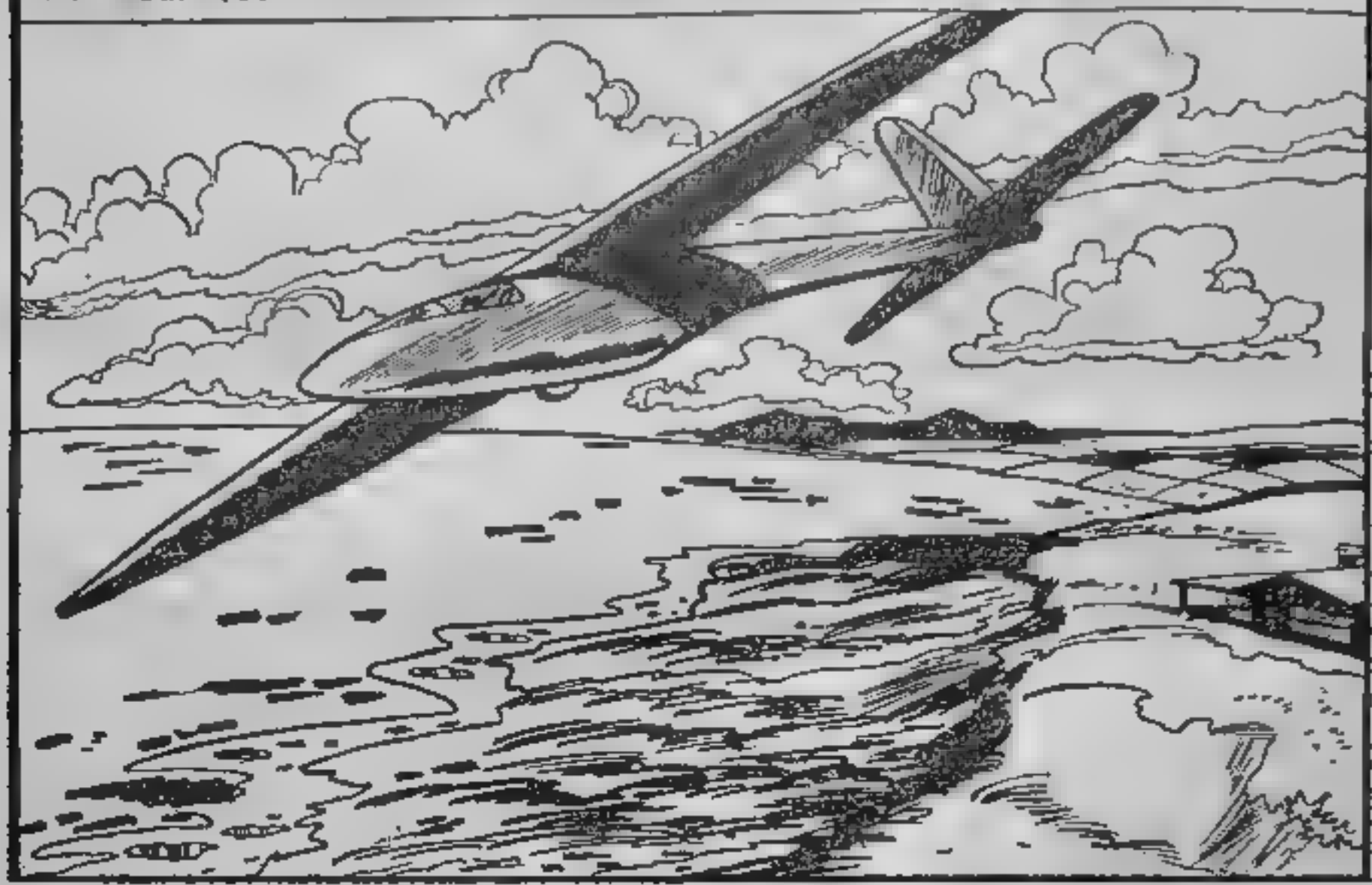
IS IT NOT POSSIBLE THEN, THAT MORE SERUM IS STILL IN EXISTENCE?
I DOUBT IT, TABU! EVERY SQUARE INCH OF THAT MUMMY AND THE SARCOPHAGUS IT CAME IN, HAS BEEN THOROUGHLY CHECKED BY THE MUSEUM PEOPLE! WHY DO YOU ASK?

IT IS NOTHING, FRIEND PETER, ONLY A PASSING THOUGHT! IS IT NOT STRANGE, HOWEVER, WHAT RESULTS ARE OBTAINED, WHEN THE NAME EVILA IS SPELLED BACKWARDS?
DAILY


THE END

THE ATMOSPHERE

"LIGHT AS AIR" IS AN EXPRESSION OFTEN HEARD...BUT FEW OF US REALIZE THAT THE BLANKET OF "LIGHT" AIR SURROUNDING OUR PLANET PRESSES DOWN UPON THE EARTH WITH A WEIGHT OF 5,000,000,000,000,000 TONS...OR 2,016 POUNDS PER SQUARE FOOT/ IN THIS HEAVY, GASEOUS SEA, MAN CARRIES HIS BURDEN WELL...AND EVEN UTILIZES THE DENSITY OF THE ELEMENT IN WHICH HE DWELLS...FLYING KITES, GLIDERS, AND AIRCRAFT, FOR INSTANCE/



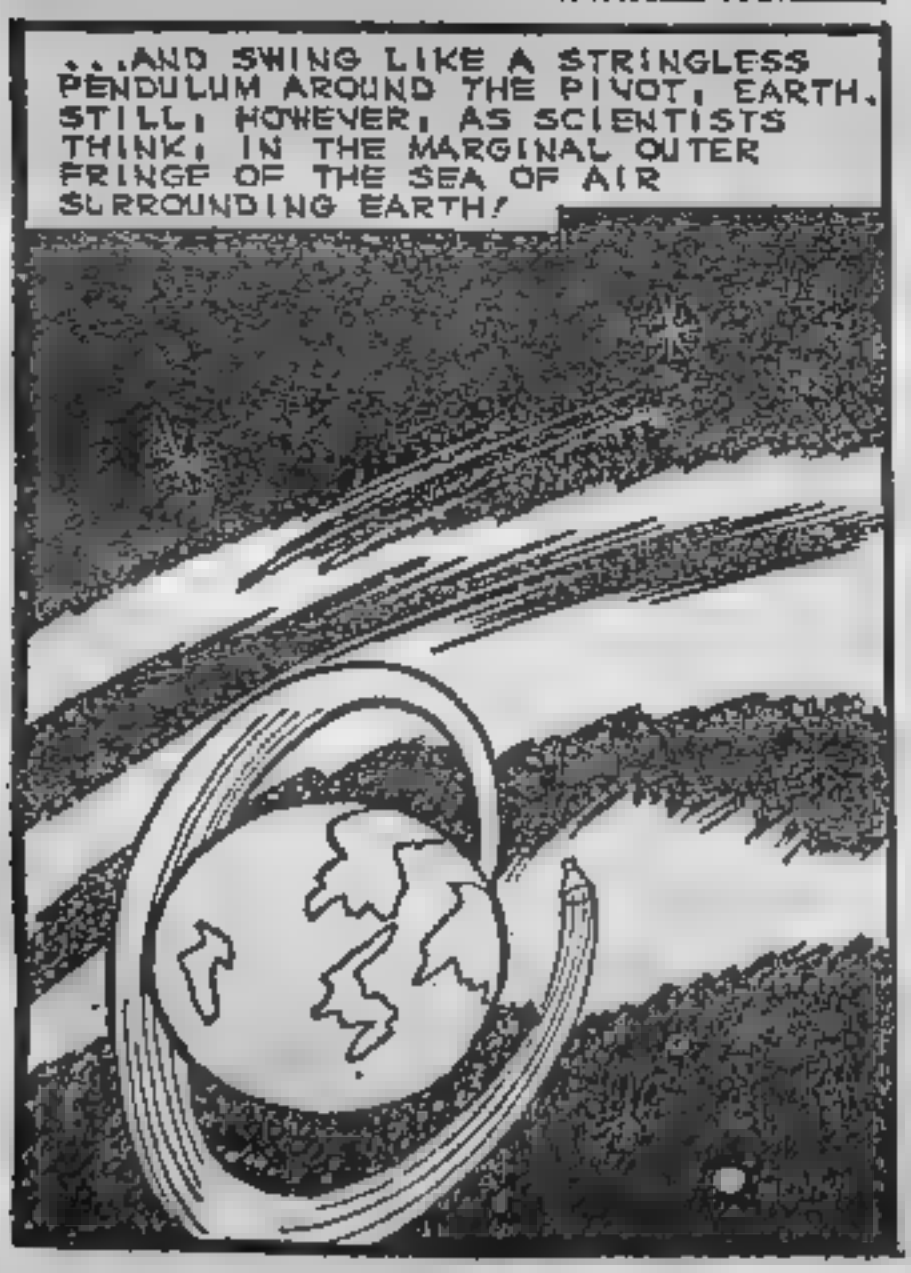
SURROUNDING EARTH, THERE IS THIS PROTECTIVE CANOPY OF AIR...

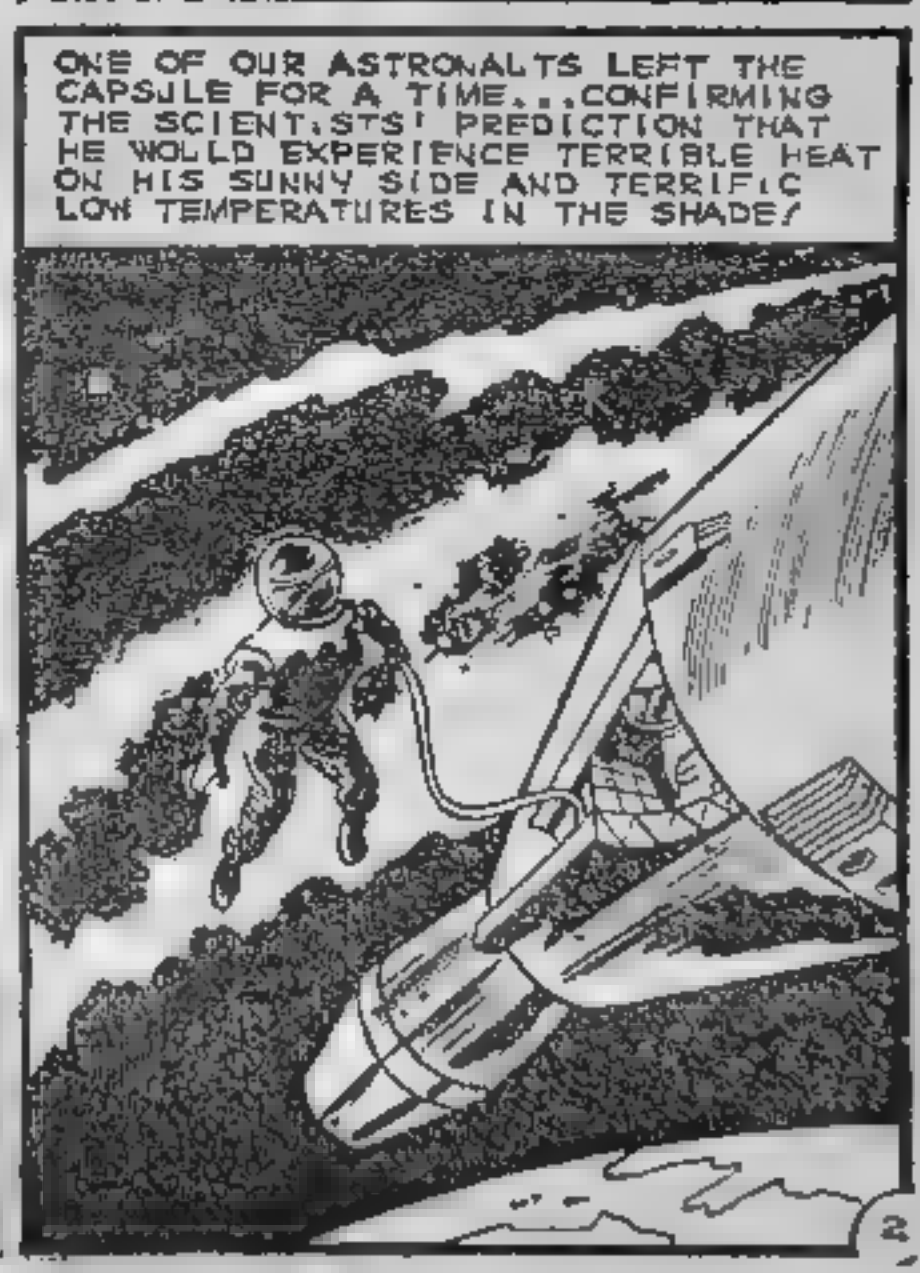
...WHICH FOR ALL PRACTICAL PURPOSES ENDS AT ABOUT 100 MILES OUT...BUT SOME OF EARTH'S GASES WANDER OUT AS MUCH AS FROM 240 TO 400 MILES AWAY FROM EARTH/

A-5262

WHEN THE ASTRONAUTS ENTERED "SPACE!" THEY REALLY DIDN'T LEAVE OUR PLANET AT ALL...

...THEY WERE BLASTED INTO ORBIT... THAT IS ENOUGH SPEED WAS ATTAINED TO CANCEL OUT THE EFFECTS OF GRAVITY...


...AND SWING LIKE A STRINGLESS PENDULUM AROUND THE PIVOT, EARTH. STILL, HOWEVER, AS SCIENTISTS THINK, IN THE MARGINAL OUTER FRINGE OF THE SEA OF AIR SURROUNDING EARTH!


ONE OF OUR ASTRONAUTS LEFT THE CAPSULE FOR A TIME...CONFIRMING THE SCIENTISTS' PREDICTION THAT HE WOULD EXPERIENCE TERRIBLE HEAT ON HIS SUNNY SIDE AND TERRIFIC LOW TEMPERATURES IN THE SHADE!

OUR EXPERIMENTAL AIRCRAFT HAVE REACHED HEIGHTS OF 250,000 FEET/ THIS FAR OUT, OXYGEN BEGINS TO DISINTEGRATE INTO HYDROXYL, OZONE, ETC/

AIRCRAFT TODAY ARE PRESSURIZED, THAT IS AN ATMOSPHERE COMPARABLE TO THAT FOUND NEAR THE GROUND IS MAINTAINED INSIDE FOR AIR CREWS AND PASSENGERS/ THIS IS BECAUSE FROM 30,000 FEET UP, THERE IS TOO LITTLE AIR TO SUPPORT RESPIRATION ...AND NOBODY WOULD STAY ALIVE UP WHERE THE FIGHTER PLANES AND JETLINERS NOW FLY/

TWELVE MILES UP (60,000 FT.), A CANDLE WON'T BURN...

THE ENVELOPE OF AIR SURROUNDING EARTH, CUSHIONS OUR PLANET FROM METEORS, FILTERS OUT SHORT-WAVE EMISSIONS GENERATED BY THE INTOLERABLE VIOLENCE OF THE SUN...

THIS BLANKET OF AIR SHUTS IN THE HEAT GENERATED DURING THE DAY AT NIGHT WHEN THE SUN IS NO LONGER SHINING/

ON THE AIRLESS MOON, TEMPERATURES REACH 230 DEGREES F. DURING THE DAY AND -300 F. AT NIGHT/ THE SEA OF AIR AROUND US REDUCES THESE EXTREMES AND ENABLES MAN TO SURVIVE/
END

WHO SAID *HALF* A MAN IS BETTER THAN NONE? *RITA*, THE CHEATER, WOULD ARGUE THAT POINT WITH YOU! NOW TAKE THE CASE OF THIS WIFE WHO WANTED TO BE A WIDOW... DID *YOU* EVER WONDER HOW *MANY* DIFFERENT WAYS A MAN CAN DIE "ACCIDENTALLY"? *PLENTY*... AND *LORNA* KNEW THEM ALL!

LISTEN, YOU FOOL

AS ALBERT RUDLEY'S WIFE, LORNA, FLICKED ON THE LIGHTS...

AND OUTSIDE VINCENT'S ROOM, ALBERT RUDLEY LISTENED WITH THE VOLUME ON HIS HEARING AID TURNED UP TO ITS HIGHEST POINT...

LIKE THE ROLLERSKATE ON THE STAIRS... I ALMOST BROKE MY NECK...

THAT EXPLODING GUN NEARLY SCARED ME TO DEATH...

THOSE FAULTY BRAKES ON MY NEW CAR LAID ME UP FOR WEEKS...

AND THAT FALLING PIANO WOULD HAVE CRUSHED ME TO MINCEMEAT!

THE NEXT DAY, AFTER THEY WERE SETTLED IN THEIR CABIN AT THE BRIGHT HARBOR BOATING RESORT, ALBERT RUDLEY TOOK A SMALL BUT DEADLY AMPULE FROM HIS POCKET AND EMPTIED IT INTO LORNA'S COFFEE...

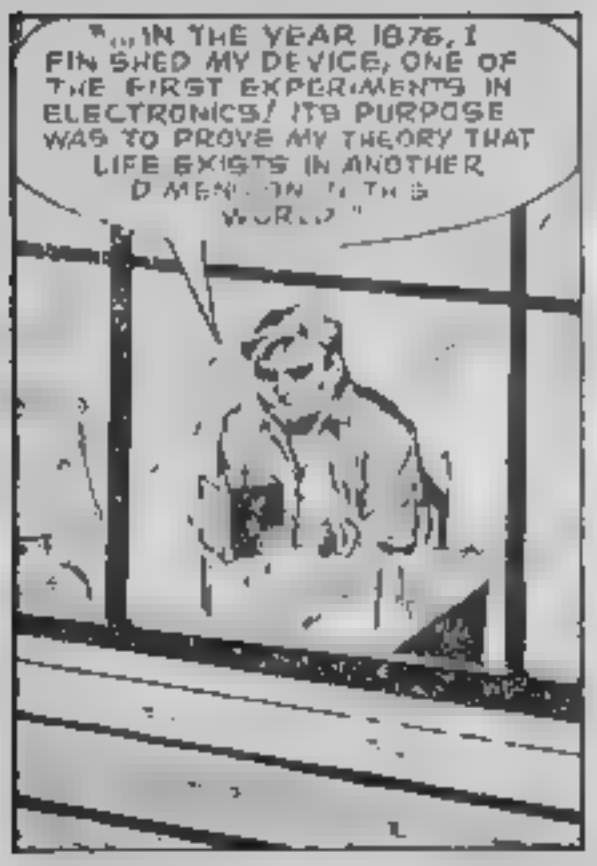
THEN HALF AN HOUR LATER, WHEN THERE WERE NO BOATS OR SWIMMING IN SIGHT...

THE INSTANT LORNA HIT THE WATER THE CRAMP-PRODUCING DRUG PARALYZED HER MUSCLES, AND SO...

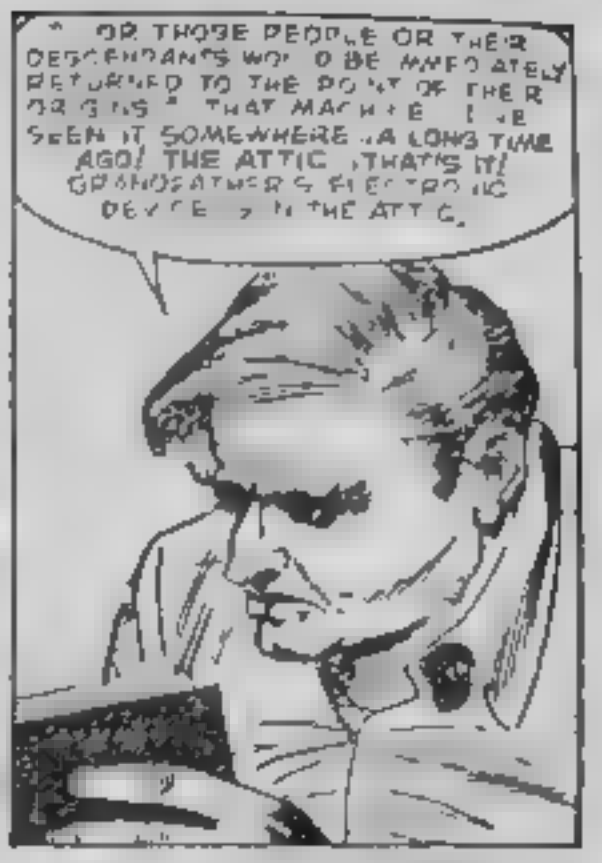
...AND THEN ALBERT RUDLEY MADE A STARTLING DISCOVERY!

AN OLD DIARY AND A MACHINE THAT HAD BEEN BUILT SIXTY YEARS AGO TO PROVE A STRANGE THEORY, GAVE LESTER HARLOW AN INFINITE POWER OVER THE LIVES OF HIS FELLOW TOWNSMEN! BUT THEY WOULDN'T LET HIM HAVE SUCH A POWER UNTIL HE SET OUT TO *PROVE* HE COULD CARRY OUT...

THE THREAT!


"...IN THE YEAR 1876, I FIN SHED MY DEVICE, ONE OF THE FIRST EXPERIMENTS IN ELECTRONICS! ITS PURPOSE WAS TO PROVE MY THEORY THAT LIFE EXISTS IN ANOTHER D MENSION IN THIS WORLD."

"ON MY FIRST ATTEMPT WITH THE DEVICE I CREEPED IN BRINGING THREE MEN, NOSTRAND GRUDER AND HAMLIN, MAURED FROM OF THE WOMEN, I NOW REALIZED THAT I HAD TO KEEP THE EVIL GRUDERS."


"OR THOSE PEOPLE OR THEIR DESCENDANTS WOULD BE IMMEDIATELY RETURNED TO THE POINT OF THEIR ORIGINS." THAT MACHINE I HAVE SEEN IT SOMEWHERE...A LONG TIME AGO! THE ATTIC...THAT'S IT! GRANDFATHER'S ELECTRONIC DEVICE...IN THE ATTIC.

BY THE TIME LESTER HARLOW REACHED THE ATTIC, HE HAD A DARK, EVIL PLAN IN MIND...
IT'S STILL RUNNING! IT'S BEEN RUNNING FOR EIGHTY YEARS, KEEPING THE NOSTRANDS, THE HAMLINS AND THE GRUDERS FROM RETURNING TO A DIFFERENT DIMENSION. WELL, IT LOOKS AS IF I'VE COME INTO A FORTUNE AFTER ALL!

ONE HARD TWIST TO THE LEFT AND THREE ENTIRE FAMILIES WOULD VANISH FROM MT. WOODFORD! THEY'LL PAY PLENTY TO STAY IN THIS DIMENSION!
ON

LESTER HARLOW MADE THREE PHONE CALLS NEXT MORNING AND THAT AFTERNOON CHARLES GRUDER, HERBERT NOSTRAND AND FRANK HAMLIN CALLED ON HIM.
WE'RE BUSY MEN, MR. HARLOW! YOU SAID IT WAS A MATTER OF LIFE OR DEATH! IF THIS IS YOUR IDEA OF A JOKE...
YOU KNOW I'M NOT JOKING, MR. HAMLIN, OR YOU WOULDN'T HAVE COME HERE! STEP INSIDE AND I'LL EXPLAIN!

THE THREE MEN LISTENED WITH UTTER AMAZEMENT AS LESTER READ TO THEM THAT PART OF HIS GRANDFATHER'S DIARY THAT CONCERNED THEIR FOREBEARS.
I'VE NEVER HEARD SUCH UTTER NONSENSE! I DOUBT YOUR GRANDFATHER, A DISTINGUISHED MAN, EVER WROTE SUCH FANTASTIC DRIVEL!
OH, HE WROTE IT ALL RIGHT! I CAN PROVE IT IF YOU WANT... BUT REMEMBER THE CONSEQUENCES IF I DO PROVE IT!

JUST WHAT DO YOU WANT, HARLOW?
FOR TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS APIECE YOU HAVE MY GUARANTEE THAT I'LL NOT STOP THAT MACHINE FROM OPERATING!

OF ALL THE CRUDE ATTEMPTS I'VE EVER HEARD TO EXTORT MONEY FROM PEOPLE, THIS BEATS EVERYTHING!
IT'S SO ABSURD, IT'S RIDICULOUS! HARLOW, DON'T YOU KNOW WE CAN HAVE YOU IMPRISONED FOR THIS?

BEFORE YOU TRY ANYTHING, FOR THE SAKE OF YOUR FAMILIES, COME UP TO THE ATTIC WITH ME! I'LL SHOW YOU ALL THE PROOF YOU NEED!

THE THREE MEN FOLLOWED LESTER IN SILENCE... THEY WERE NO LONGER LAUGHING, YET WERE UNWILLING TO KNUCKLE UNDER TO HIS DEMANDS.
IF I TURN THIS DIAL JUST A LITTLE, ONE OF YOU MAY VANISH... BACK TO THE DIMENSION YOU CAME FROM! IN THAT CASE, MY PRICE FOR PROTECTION OF THOSE THAT REMAIN WILL BE DOUBLED!
GO ON, HARLOW! TURN THE DIAL! WE'RE CALLING YOUR BLUFF!

LESTER HARLOW TURNED THE DIAL SLIGHTLY TO THE LEFT...THE STRANGE DEVICE MOANED SOFTLY... AND THEN...
LOOK! HARLOW HIMSELF IS VANISHING!

WITHIN SECONDS, LESTER HARLOW WAS GONE! THE ASTONISHED VISITORS SOUGHT AN EXPLANATION IN THE OLD DIARY... AND THEY READ FURTHER ON...
"I MENTION NOW THE FOURTH WOMAN TO COME FROM THAT OTHER DIMENSION, LYDIA WALLING, WHOM MY SON MARRIED! SHE WAS THE FIRST TO ARRIVE HERE, AND SHE AND ANY OF THEIR DESCENDANTS WOULD UNQUESTIONABLY BE THE FIRST TO RETURN TO THAT DIMENSION SHOULD THE MACHINE BE GLOWED!"
3

THERE IS THE END OF THE THREAT TO US AND OUR FAMILIES, GENTLEMEN! WHAT DO YOU SUGGEST WE DO NOW?
I SUGGEST WE DO NOTHING BUT GO HOME, FORGET THIS EVER HAPPENED! I'M GOING TO BURN THE HARLOW DIARY! WE MUST NEVER TELL ANYBODY ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED HERE THIS AFTERNOON!
THE END

SOMEHOW, JOHNSON HAD TO MAKE CERTAIN THAT HE WAS *NOT* THE MAN THE NATIVES SELECTED TO BE PUNISHED FOR INSULTING THEIR..

JU-JU!

JOHNSON SHOOK HIS HEAD! TALK WAS NO GOOD NOW! AND THE ALARM WAS ALREADY A LIVING THING INSIDE HIM..

JOHNSON HAD NO THOUGHT FOR THE OTHERS.. IN THIS WORLD A MAN LOOKED OUT FOR HIMSELF..

JOHNSON ALMOST MADE IT! THEN THE WHOLE WORLD SEEMED TO EXPLODE! BUT HE COULD STILL THINK! LATER..

JOHNSON RAN! BUT THEN HE SLOWED..

IT TOOK LONG, TORTUROUS DAYS! DAYS OF UTTER EXHAUSTION. BUT IN THE END, JOHNSON MADE IT

GOT TO KEEP GOING... BUT THERE'S NO END TO IT...

AT LAST, THE GRASS IS THINNING! THAT'S OUR TENT! THE BASE CAMP...

WELL THAT DOES IT. EVERYTHING'S SET: GUNS, FOOD, EXTRA AMMUNITION! I ONLY HOPE WE'RE NOT TOO LATE!

WE OWE JOHNSON A LOT! HE RISKED HIS NECK TO MAKE THAT BREAK! JUST TO GIVE *US* A CHANCE TO *ESCAPE!*

THE OTHERS! I KNOW THOSE VOICES. THEY GOT AWAY!

IF HE'S STILL ALIVE, WE'LL FIND HIM!

THIS IS EVEN BETTER THAN I HOPED! THEY THINK I'M A HERO!

JOHNSON HURRIED FORWARD EAGERLY. BUT AS HE EMERGED FROM THE GRASS INTO A CLEARING, HE STOPPED SHORT...

NO! IT CAN'T BE...

JOHNSON'S SMILE VANISHED! HE COULD ONLY THANK HIS LUCKY STARS NOW THAT THE EFFECT OF THE DRUG THE NATIVES HAD SPOKEN ABOUT, WORE OFF IN TIME...

JOHNSON!

THE NATIVES HADN'T LEFT HIM FOR DEAD, AFTER ALL...

THE END

The Missing Film

A BABBLE of strange voices welled around Dr. Title's ears as he wandered along the twisting streets of the ancient town. Han-lo was unlike anything he had ever seen. From the richly varied colored robes of the rich to the drab garments of the poor, the ever-changing scene fascinated him.

There were many tourists shopping the odd stalls in the market place, tourists who looked much like Dr. Title in his conventional tweed with a camera hanging over his shoulder. For that added reason it was all the more difficult for Dr. Title to tell himself that he was *not* a tourist, and that he had no time to be one. It was better for his job if he looked like any other European, a little lost, a little confused, drinking in the strange sights and casting his eyes carefully over everything. But Dr. Title had a job to do. And this job was part of a very important mission that had brought him to Han-lo.

Dr. Title represented on this trip a film processing company that had been doing special government work. And then one day it was discovered that a new and valuable record of de-coded documents were missing from the plant. A detailed search was made of the premises, but it was too late. The vital film was missing, and by this time it could undoubtedly be in the hands of enemy agents.

When Dr. Title was called in to investigate the situation, he listened carefully to the harassed protests of the men who were in charge of safety precautions at the film plant.

"Everyone here has been checked and double-checked," a troubled executive told him. "We have people on our books who have been working here for years, and this is the first time we've been faced with such an extraordinary disappearance of valuable film. If we can't account for this, our entire reputation will be ruined! We can't allow a slip-up in this business! And how it happened, I just can't understand. Why, even our guards here are men who have spent almost a lifetime in government service. Our entire staff is so completely trustworthy!"

"One loose link in a chain can destroy the chain," Dr. Title observed wisely. "Now let me see . . . this film is catalogued by number, and it was not processed yet. Any person who made off with it would have to know the subject matter involved, and that narrows the field down to a small group of men. Let me have the names and backgrounds of all these persons who would have an intimate knowledge of where this film came from and what its contents might be."

When Dr. Title checked and re-checked each man on the list that was presented to him, one fact proved extremely interesting. Three days before the film disappeared, a man by the name of Douglas Jenks was marked as being on vacation.

"Jenks?" asked the supervisor when Dr. Title questioned him. "Why there's nothing significant that Jenks' going on vacation three days *before* the film was taken could have to do with its disappearance. Besides, Jenks is one of the mildest, meekest men you'd ever want to meet in your whole life. *And he wasn't here at the time!*"

"I know," said Dr. Title with a sigh, and trying to hold on to his waning patience. "But could you tell me where I can find him now?"

"He's gone to the Orient, I believe."

Before Dr. Title played his hunch, he took intricate pains to establish the possibilities of what he thought to be true. And the more he investigated quietly, the more certain he was that if he caught up with Douglas Jenks he would find the missing film. He knew that Jenks would have to have had an accomplice to perform his neat trick, but Dr. Title could not waste precious time finding out who that person was now. His immediate problem was to reach Jenks and snatch the precious film from under his nose before he could dispose of it to a foreign agent who would pay a handsome price for it.

Fortunately, time was still on Dr. Title's side. His plane could reach the Orient before Douglas Jenks' boat was due to arrive. In Han-lo, Dr. Title hired the services of a trusted agent to check the mailroom at the hotel Douglas Jenks was scheduled to

stop at.

"There is a small brown package waiting for Douglas Jenks at the hotel," his agent reported.

"Do you have the exact postmark and enough knowledge of how the package looked to duplicate it exactly?" asked Dr. Title eagerly.

The agent nodded. And Dr. Title busily made arrangments to duplicate the package. As he suspected when the original one mailed to Douglas Jenks was turned over to him, it contained the missing films. For as Dr. Title had suspected, Jenks was mailed the secret films at his Han-lo address where he could carry through with the intrigue to put them in the hands of the enemy agent who would pay the biggest price.

It would have been a fairly simple thing at this stage of the game to call in government agents to take Douglas Jenks into custody. But Dr. Title was bargaining for more than this. His plan was to smoke out the agents Jenks was in contact with so that he would have a record of their operations to report back to his own government. For that reason he pretended to let Jenks have a free hand . . . until he knew that Jenks had definitely made contact with the agents to whom he was to turn over the secret films. It was then that Dr. Title introduced himself.

"It's useless for you to protest," Dr. Title explained. "Actually, I'm saving your life . . . not that it's worth anything to anyone but yourself after the foolish attempt to sell out your own country. Well, I've seen greed do strange things to men, and you are one of these victims. If you can redeem yourself at all, it will be in helping us now. That may lighten the punishment for you."

Jenks broke down and wept.

"It wasn't my idea! My assistant dragged me into this mess. I owed him the money, and he blackmailed me."

"As a matter of fact, Jenks, it was the name and address of the person you and your assistant gambled with that led me onto this. They set a neat trap for you, didn't they? You were weak for cards and they put you at their mercy. But you were too afraid of them to give away their scheme, weren't you?

Lucky for you that I'm taking your place tonight when you're supposed to meet the big boys. The film is switched now, Mr. Jenks. If they find out before I leave them, my life won't mean very much. But that's a chance I have to take. At least one of us has something worthwhile to sacrifice his life for."

Angrily, Dr. Title left Jenks with his government's agents. He dressed himself in Jenks' clothes and put on thick glasses like Jenks wore. Then he headed for the meeting place with the enemy agents.

At the appointed place he held the box of phony films in front of him. A man stepped forward.

"Come with me, Jenks," he said.

They followed the twisting streets to a narrow bridge. An old man stopped them.

"This is the Bridge of Good-and-Evil," he whispered. "And it is written that after midnight the evil spirits shall hold the bridge in its spell."

"You're wasting your time talking that nonsense to me," said the enemy agent curtly.

Dr. Title was intrigued at the superstition though. As the old man disappeared, he noticed it was only eleven o'clock.

His expert eye took in every bit of valuable information available at the meeting place he was taken to. He memorized names and bits of information he heard. He played for time, and before the agents became too restless in their anxiety to examine the film package, he excused himself. He slipped through a small bathroom window and tore down the pebbled road. Looking back he saw that they were already gaining on him. As he approached the bridge he almost felt it was useless. This was one race he couldn't win. He barely got to the other side, and the men were almost there. He heard the bells toll midnight. He stared in astonishment as he remembered the superstitious old mans' words. The bridge swung sideways and threw the enemy agents into the cold dark waters below.

The secret films were already safe, and Dr. Title left Han-lo on the next plane. Someday, he decided, he must return to Han-lo . . . but strictly as a tourist!

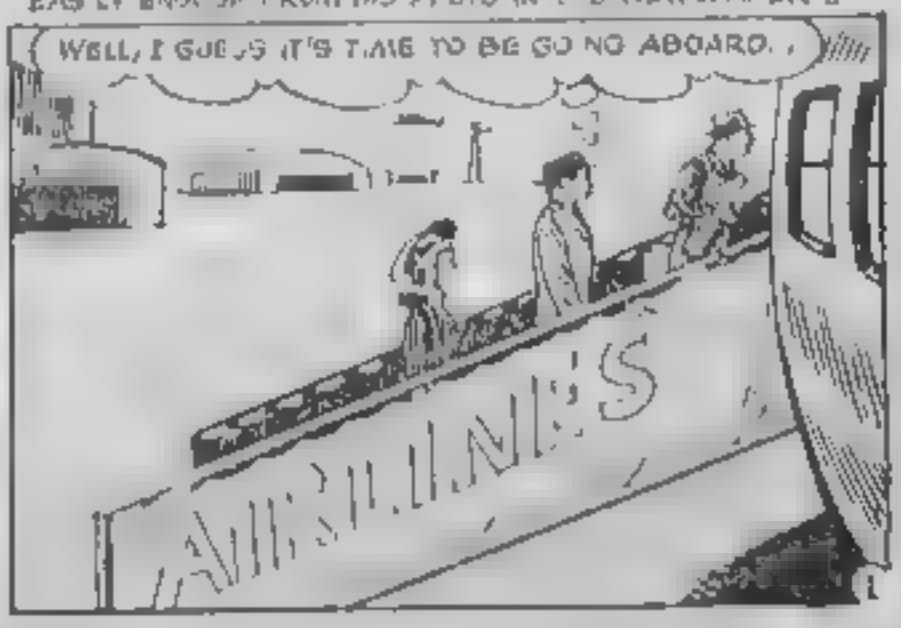
THE END J-707

WHAT WAS THE SECRET OF THE SMALL BOX WITH ITS CLOCKLIKE WORKS? BRUNO AMES WAS UNABLE TO FIND OUT BUT THEN HE WAS BEING PAID ONLY TO STEAL IT! AND YET, THAT MYSTERIOUS INVENTION WAS TO HAVE A GREAT BEARING ON BRUNO'S LIFE AS HE WAS DESTINED TO LEARN ON

the NIGHT of MARCH 5th

IVAN NOVITCH, LEADER OF A SPY RING IN NEW YORK, SCOWLED DARKLY AT HIS COURIER, BRUNO AMES ..

BRUNO AMES WAS ABLE TO RECOGNIZE INVENTOR WILSON EASILY ENOUGH FROM HIS PHOTO IN THE NEWSPAPER ..

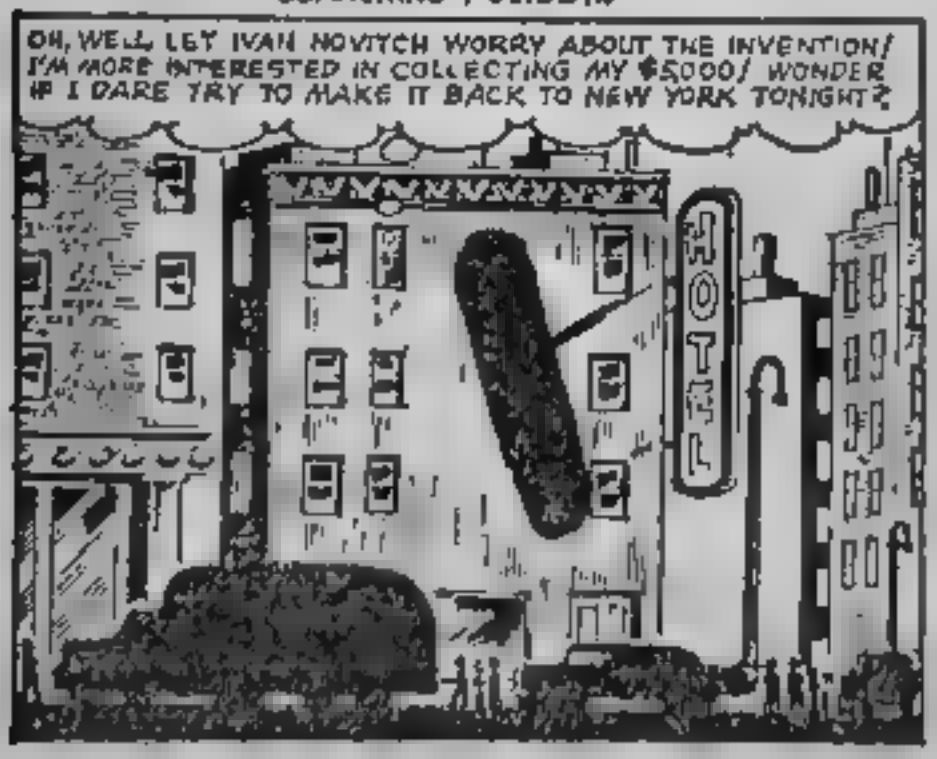


THE PLANE SOON TOOK OFF FOR WASHINGTON, D.C., AND BRUNO AMES, WHO WAS AN EXPERIENCED HAND AT THIS SORT OF THING, COULDN'T IMAGINE ANYTHING GOING WRONG...

IMMEDIATELY UPON DEBARKING, BRUNO CARRIED OUT HIS PLAN, BUT SOMETHING *DID* GO WRONG! THE COURIER DID NOT ANTICIPATE THAT THE INVENTOR WOULD BE GREETED BY A NEWS PHOTOGRAPHER.

BECAUSE OF WHAT HAPPENED, BRUNO AMES WHO HAD SUCCESSFULLY ELUDED HIS PURSUERS CHANGED HIS PLANS. HE HOLED UP IN A THIRD-RATE HOTEL...

DARING NOT TO VENTURE OUT, HE SNEAKED A LOOK THRU THE WINDOW NOW AND THEN, CONSTANTLY ON THE ALERT FOR SEARCHING POLICE...



BRUNO AMES PASSED A NUMBER OF POLICEMEN ON HIS WAY TO THE TERMINAL, AND WAS PERPLEXED, AS WELL AS HIGHLY RELIEVED, THAT THEY FAILED TO TAKE NOTICE OF HIM...

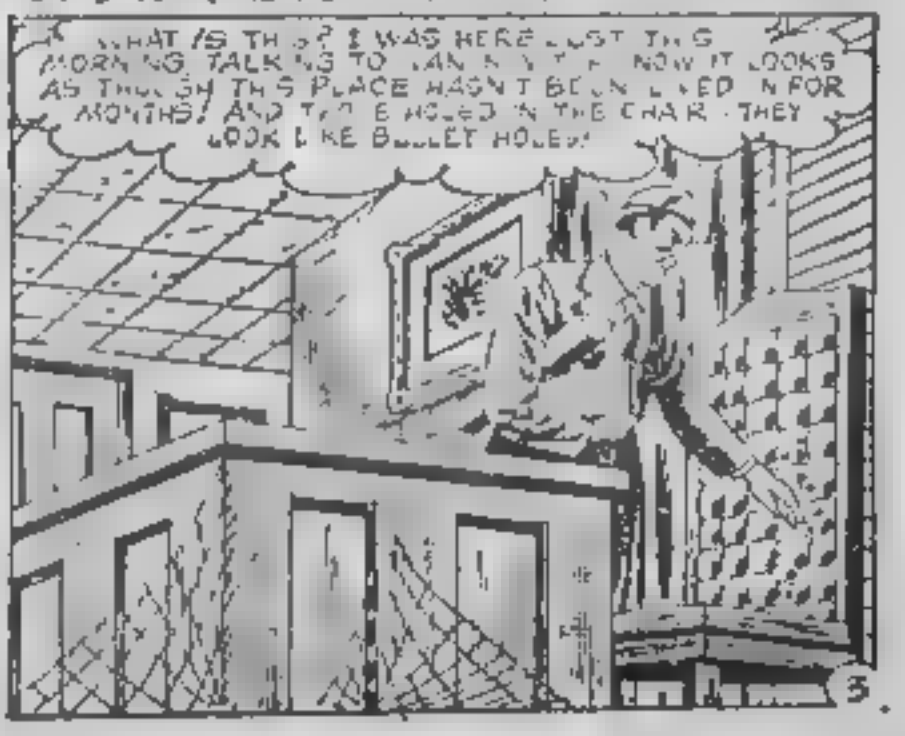
THUS ON THE NIGHT OF MARCH 5TH, ENDED THE FIRST PART OF BRUNO AMEG' STRANGE ADVENTURE! BUT IT WAS ONLY THE BEGINNING OF STRANGER THINGS YET TO COME! BRUNO HAD ARRIVED AT PENN STATION IN NEW YORK WHERE HE COULD BETTER RISK A GLANCE AT THE HEADLINES

A MOMENT LATER BRUNO SAW SOMEONE HE KNEW ANOTHER MEMBER OF THAT SPY RING A MAN HE'D KNOWN FOR SOME YEARS! PERHAPS HE COULD TELL BRUNO WHAT THIS WAS ALL ABOUT...

BRUNO WAS MYSTIFIED, BUT TRIED TO SHRUG OFF THE MAN'S STRANGE REACTION! HOWEVER, THE MYSTERY WAS TO DEEPEN. BRUNO MET ANOTHER MAN ON THE STREET

THAT MAN, TOO, PALED AND RAN! AND THERE WERE OTHERS...

PERHAPS THERE WAS SOMEBODY AT THE CHIEF'S APARTMENT WHO COULD SHED LIGHT ON THE MYSTERY... AND MORE IMPORTANT PAY GREND FOR THE [illegible] HE'D STOLEN. HE WENT THERE FOUND THE DOOR OPEN...



ON THE CHANCE THAT SOMEONE MIGHT COME, BRUNO SAT DOWN! HE WAS EAGER TO READ ABOUT NOVITCH IN FULL DETAIL! BUT HIS EYES GOT NO FURTHER THAN THE DATE AT THE HEAD OF THE NEWSPAPER

BRUNO GRABBED THE MYSTERIOUS DEVICE FROM THE DESK, RIPPED OFF ITS WRAPPING, MOVED THE HAND OF THE CLOCK-LIKE MECHANISM BACK A NOTCH

IN AN INSTANT, ALL WAS RESTORED! IT WAS AGAIN THE NIGHT OF MARCH 5TH, 1957! THE AMAZED SPY-COURIER GRINNED WITH RELIEF...

THERE WAS ANOTHER REASON WHY THE POLICE IGNORED BRUNO AMES ON THE NIGHT OF MARCH 5TH 1958! BRUNO WAS TO KNOW THAT A MOMENT LATER WHEN IVAN NOVITCH ENTERED...

BRUNO'S EYES WENT FROM NOVITCH TO THE TWO STONY-FACED GUNMEN WHO ENTERED! A COLD CHILL RAN THRU HIM...

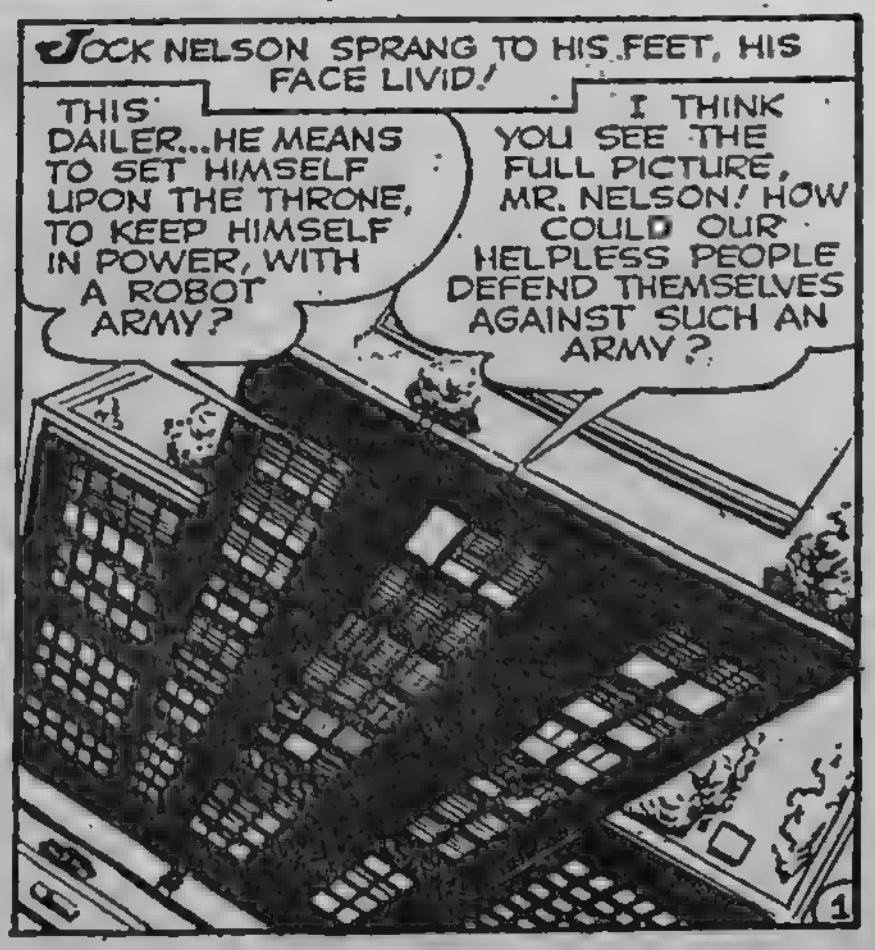
AND ALL AT ONCE BRUNO AMES UNDERSTOOD IT ALL!

TO THE SOLDIER OF FORTUNE, THERE ARE FEW THINGS IN THE WORLD THAT WILL SURPRISE HIM, FEWER THAT WILL ANGER HIM! JOCK NELSON WOULD FIGHT FOR THE HIGHEST BIDDER, YET HE WAS ASTONISHED AND ENRAGED BY THE EVIL MEANS EMPLOYED BY ONE CUNNING MAN TO BRING A NATION UNDER HIS HEEL!

THEY'RE COMING CLOSER

MR. RADJO... PRIME MINISTERS HAVE COME TO ME BEFORE, TO FIGHT FOR THEIR GOVERNMENTS! KINGS ARE A BIT UNUSUAL THESE DAYS, BUT I'LL FLY MY PLANE FOR ANYBODY, IF THE PRICE IS RIGHT!

I THINK IT ONLY FAIR TO WARN YOU, MR. NELSON, THIS RUDOLF DAILER HAS GATHERED A LARGE ARMY TO OVERTHROW OUR *KING HAZID!* BUT NO ORDINARY ARMY!



HOW WOULD PEOPLE LIVE UNDER SUCH A TYRANT? MR. RADJO, I ACCEPT YOUR OFFER!
ON REACHING DRUZEK, LAND YOUR PLANE IN THE PALACE GROUNDS! I SHALL MEET YOU THERE!

TWO DAYS LATER, AS JOCK FLEW OVER THE SOUTHERN EUROPEAN MOUNTAINS, HIS THOUGHTS WERE THUS...
I WANT THAT FIFTY THOUSAND BUT BEATING THAT DAILER, GIVES ME A REAL REASON FOR FIGHTING!

AN HOUR LATER, OSKAR CONDUCTED JOCK NELSON TO THE GOOD AND KINDLY KING HAZID...
YOU HAVE BEEN GIVEN THE RANK OF GENERAL OF THE IMPERIAL ARMY, THOUGH IT CONSISTS ONLY OF THE PALACE GUARDS...NO MATCH I'M AFRAID, FOR DAILER'S ROBOTS!
I'LL WHIP THAT ARMY, YOU'LL SEE I WILL! I'M MAD ENOUGH TO DO ANYTHING!

YOU'RE A BRAVE MAN, BUT IT WILL TAKE MORE THAN COURAGE! YOU ALONE CANNOT FIGHT IRON MEN REMOTE-CONTROLLED BY A MAN IN AN ARMORED CAR!
REMOTE CONTROL!, RADIO! THAT'S IT! YOU'VE GIVEN ME THE ANSWER! I HAVE A RADIO TRANSMITTER IN MY PLANE!

LATER AS JOCK WAS SETTING UP HIS TRANSMITTER ON THE PALACE BALCONY...
IF YOU PLAN TO APPEAL TO RUDOLF DAILER BY RADIO, YOU'RE WASTING YOUR TIME!
I'M A FIGHTING MAN, SIR, NOT A SPEAKER! YOU'LL SEE!

SOON A CRY RAN THROUGH THE CAPITAL CITY OF THE KINGDOM...
THE ROBOT ARMY IS COMING!
THEY'RE COMING CLOSER!

THE BLACKGUARD DAILER AND HIS ROBOTS...COMING CLOSER!
LET 'EM COME!

THE ROBOTS CAME CLANKING! ON THE PALACE BALCONY, JOCK WAITED UNTIL THEY REACHED THE GATES!

NOW!

SUDDENLY THE ROBOTS STOPPED DEAD! THEY SHUDDERED AND MOVED ABOUT AIMLESSLY...

THEY'VE GONE BERSERK! I CAN'T CONTROL THEM!

CLAW!

CLANK!

BANG!

THE DIN OF SHATTERING ROBOTS COULD BE HEARD FOR MILES...

IT'S WORKING! I'VE *JAMMED* DAILER'S REMOTE-CONTROL WAVE-LENGTH BROADCAST WITH MY TRANSMITTER!

WHAT'S WRONG? I WAS JUST BRINGING KING HAZID THE GOOD NEWS!

HE HAS HAD A BAD ATTACK...

THE KING IS GRATEFUL, TO YOU, GENERAL! IN FACT HIS MAJESTY HAS A CHECK FOR YOU FOR FIFTY THOUSAND DOLLARS!

ALL THAT BANGING IN THERE! WON'T THAT DISTURB THE KING?

BANG! BANG! BANG!

NO! AS A MATTER OF FACT, HE'LL BE IN A LOT BETTER SHAPE, AFTER IT'S DONE! YOU SEE... WHEN YOU JAMMED THE ENEMY'S WAVE LENGTH AND SMASHED HIS ROBOTS, YOU JAMMED *HIS* TOO! HE GOT PRETTY BADLY BANGED UP, BUT IT WAS WELL WORTH IT!

THE END

IT GROWS ON TREES!

THE *LAST* PLACE A MAN EXPECTS TO FIND MONEY IS IN HIS BACK YARD! YET THERE IT WAS...GROWING ON *TREES!*

OF COURSE I'M RIGHT! I KNOW WHEN I SEE IT! THESE ARE BILLS OF ALL DENOMINATIONS! FIVES, TENS, TWENTIES!

WHAT ARE THEY DOING ON THE TREE? THAT'S A NORWEGIAN MAPLE!

I KNOW IT'S A NORWEGIAN MAPLE! BUT THIS IS MONEY! HOW DID IT GET HERE, GORSE?

WHAT ARE YOU ASKING ME FOR? I NEVER SAW IT BEFORE!

AND STOP EXAMINING THOSE BILLS AS IF THEY WERE SOME STRANGE BOTANICAL SPECIMEN! IT'S A HOAX! A PRACTICAL JOKE DEVISED BY ONE OF MY RIVALS!

BUT IT ISN'T A TRICK! THE BILLS ARE GENUINE! WHO WOULD DO IT?

YOU KNOW WHO! EVERY OTHER PLANT AND TREE EXPERT IN TOWN, INCLUDING YOURSELF! YES, LEWTON, I WOULDN'T PUT A TRICK LIKE THIS PAST YOU!

BUT IT ISN'T A TRICK! THE BILLS ARE GENUINE!

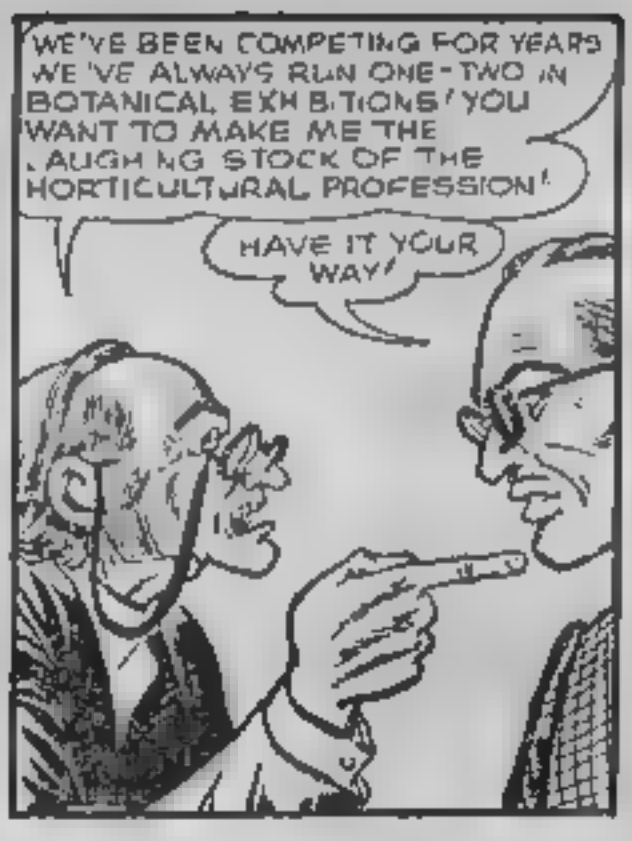
I KNOW THEY'RE GENUINE! BUT I ALSO KNOW THAT MONEY DOESN'T GROW ON TREES!

BUT IT DOES! THE EVIDENCE IS BEFORE US!

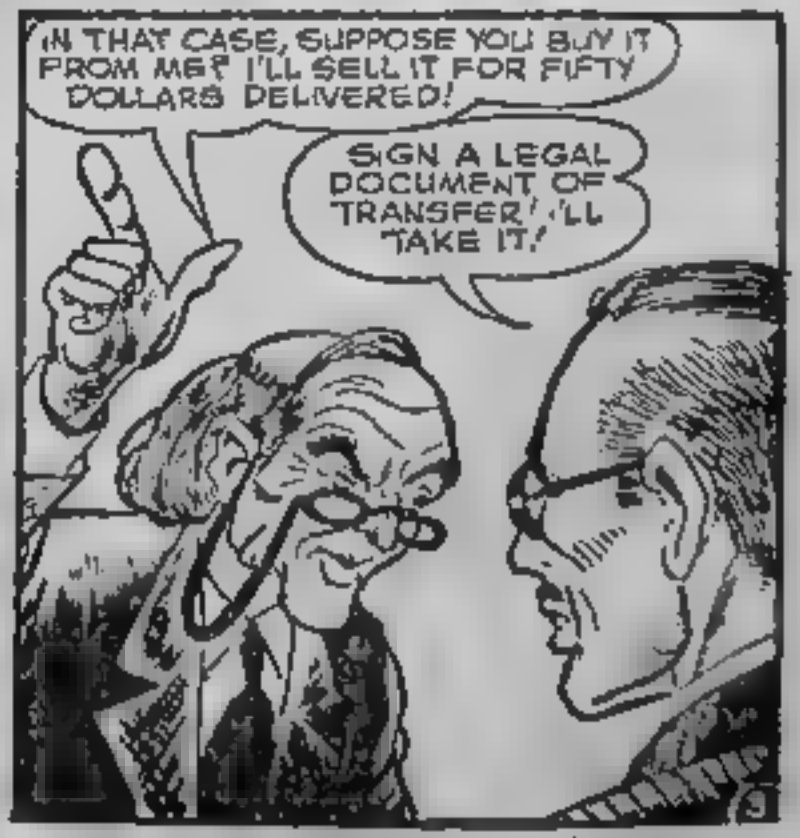
THE EVIDENCE IS THAT A PRANK HAS BEEN PLAYED ON ME! EVERYBODY KNOWS I'M THE COUNTRY'S MOST SKILLFUL HORTICULTURIST!

NOBODY DENIES THAT, GORSE!

EVERYBODY ENVIES ME MY GENIUS, MY WEALTH, MY SUCCESS! SOMEBODY ATTACHED THESE BILLS TO THE TREE AS A WAY OF MOCKING ME! WELL, THIS IS WHAT I THINK OF HIS TRICK!



THE FOLLOWING AFTERNOON...

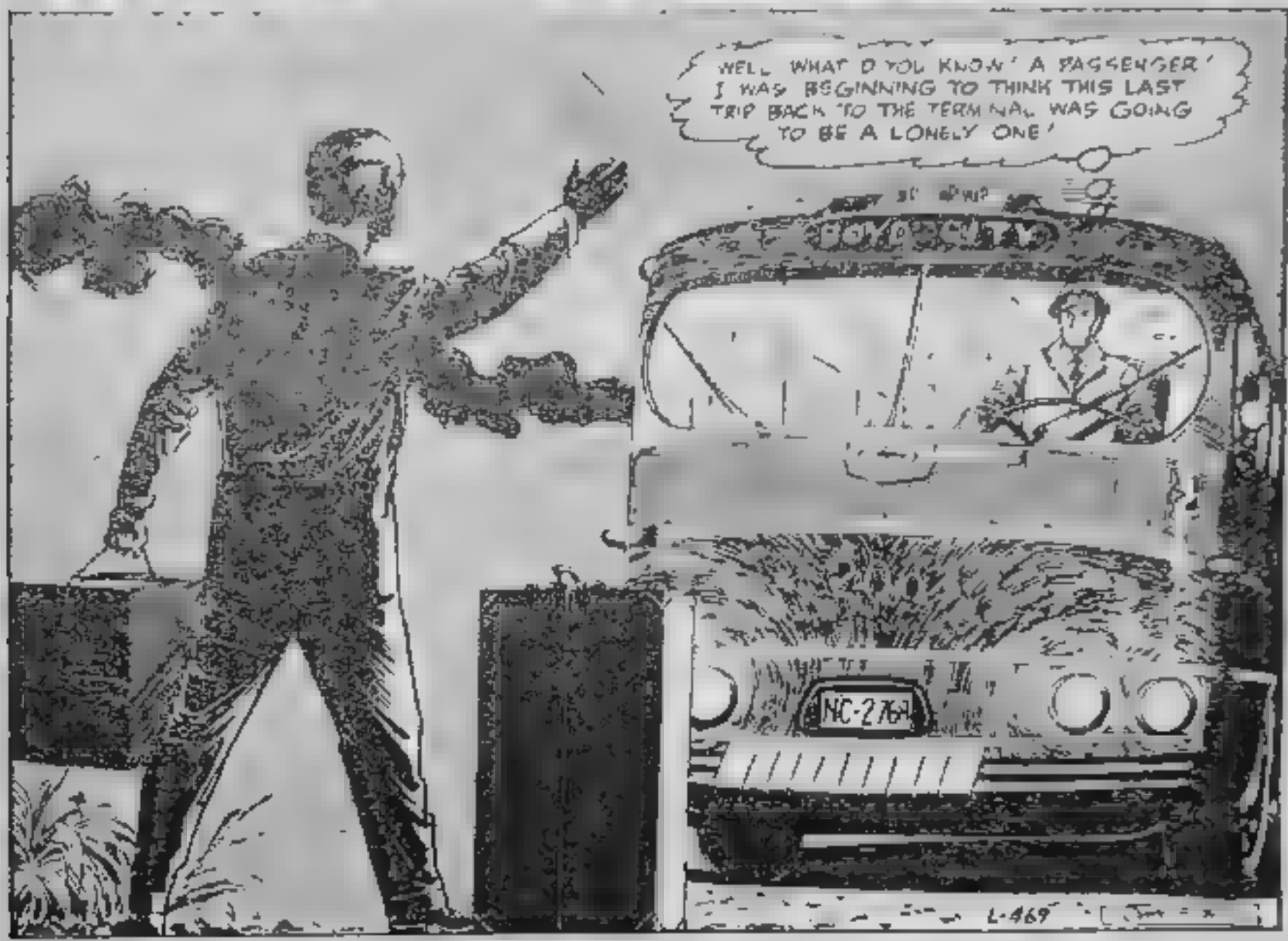


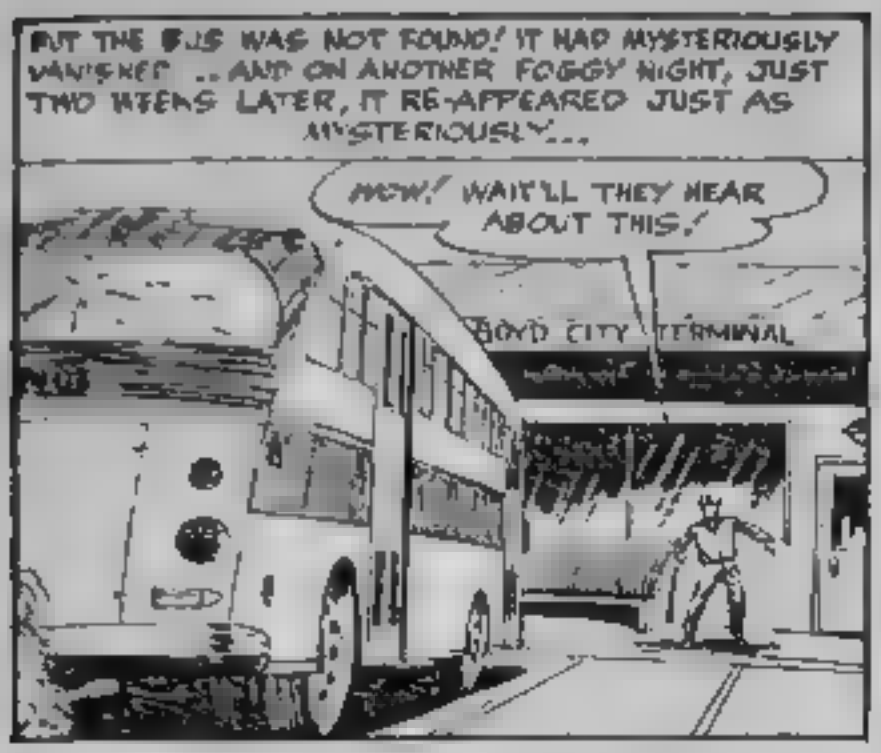
THE FOLLOWING DAY...

AN HOUR LATER AT LEWTON'S HOME

RICK NOLAN HAD HAD HIS FILL OF ADVENTURE IN THE LAST BIG WAR! BUT NOTHING THAT HE'D BEEN THROUGH IN 1944 COMPARED WITH THE ASTOUNDING EXPERIENCE HE ENCOUNTERED WHEN RECENTLY HE BECAME ONE OF

THOSE *who* DISAPPEAR!




BUT THE BUS WAS NOT FOUND! IT HAD MYSTERIOUSLY VANISHED ...AND ON ANOTHER FOGGY NIGHT, JUST TWO WEEKS LATER, IT RE-APPEARED JUST AS MYSTERIOUSLY...
WOW! WAIT'LL THEY HEAR ABOUT THIS!
BOYD CITY TERMINAL

MR. PETERS! HE'S BACK! RICK NOLAN IS COMIN' WITH THE BUS!
WHAT!

THE DRIVER WAS HUSTLED INTO THE OFFICE. MR. PETERS THE COMPANY PRESIDENT AND THE TWO DETECTIVES EYED HIM COLDLY...
YOU'RE IN A LOT OF TROUBLE, NOLAN! YOU'D BETTER HAVE A GOOD STORY!
IT'S A FANTASTIC STORY, SIR! YOU WON'T BELIEVE IT, BUT I'VE GOT TO TELL IT, ANYHOW!

RICK NOLAN TOLD ABOUT THE NIGHT HE HAD PICKED UP SCIENTIST EMIL HARSCH: "...SUDDENLY I HAD THE FEELING THE BUS WAS RISING FROM THE HIGHWAY! I THOUGHT IT WAS MY IMAGINATION, TILL I LOOKED AROUND..."
HEY! WHAT ARE YOU UP TO?
TESTING A NEW INVENTION! MY NEW ANTI-GRAVITY MACHINE!

"I'D BEEN IN PLANES PLENTY DURING THE WAR, BUT THIS WAS ENOUGH TO SCARE THE DAYLIGHTS OUT OF ME! I RUSHED AT THIS CHARACTER HARSCH..."
ARE YOU CRAZY? GET THE BUS DOWN!
I ASSURE YOU I'M AS SANE AS YOU, MY FRIEND! AND IF YOU THINK YOU CAN BRING THIS BUS TO LAND WITHOUT ME, WELL GO AHEAD, TRY IT!

THAT'S THE STORY, MR. PETERS! I PLEADED WITH HARSCH BUT HE KEPT THAT BUS UP THERE TILL TONIGHT! WE LIVED ON FOOD AND WATER HE BROUGHT ALONG IN A CARTON!
YOU'LL HAVE A HARD TIME MAKING A JURY SWALLOW THAT NONSENSE!

JURY! B BUT, I'VE TOLD YOU THE TRUTH! AND I BROUGHT THE BUS BACK!
IT'S STILL GRAND LARCENY, STEALING A BUS, NOLAN! THE COURT WILL PROBABLY TAKE YOUR RETURNING THE BUS INTO CONSIDERATION! BUT I'D FORGET THAT PHONY STORY... JUST TELL THE TRUTH, NOLAN!

RICK RIPPED AWAY FROM THE GRIP OF THE DETECTIVES AND DASHED WILDLY INTO THE HEAVY FOG...

I CAN'T BLAME ANYBODY FOR NOT BELIEVING ME! I'VE GOT TO FIND HARSCH AND MAKE HIM TELL THE TRUTH!

THERE WAS A GENERAL ALARM OUT FOR RICK NOLAN, BUT HE WAS SOON ALL BUT FORGOTTEN WHEN A NEW CRIME AROSE TO PLAGUE THE POLICE - .

NOW LOOK, MR. CLAYTON, AN OCEAN LINER DOESN'T JUST VANISH! NOBODY CAN HIDE ANYTHING THAT BIG FOR LONG!

I READ ABOUT YOUR HAVING SAID THE SAME THING CONCERNING A MISSING BUS! THAT SHIP IS WORTH MILLIONS!

AN EXCITED WIRELESS OPERATOR RAN UP TO THE BEWILDERED GROUP WITH A RADIO MESSAGE HE'D JUST RECEIVED FROM THE MISSING SHIP...

WELL YOU LISTEN TO THIS!..."YOUR SHIP, THE OCEANIC, IS SAFE IN MY HANDS! YOU MAY HAVE IT BACK FOR ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS CASH! I'LL COMMUNICATE WITH YOU FURTHER! SHOULD THE POLICE TRY TO TRAP ME, I'LL SEND THE OCEANIC TO THE BOTTOM!"

SHIP OWNER, LAWRENCE CLAYTON, GOT THE POLICE'S WORD THEY'D KEEP AWAY FROM THE AREA! BUT POLICE BOATS PATROLLED UPRIVER AND DOWN! THAT NIGHT, CLAYTON HEARD FROM THE SHIP THIEF AGAIN AND AGREED TO HIS TERMS! AFTER MIDNIGHT...

..I LEFT THE MONEY ON THE DOCK! AT EXACTLY 12:20 I CAME OUT OF MY OFFICE, THE MONEY WAS GONE AND THERE WAS THE OCEANIC!

HOW COULD ONE MAN GET A SHIP THAT SIZE INTO DOCK WITHOUT BEING HEARD? AND HOW COULD HE GET BY ALL THE PATROL BOATS WITHOUT BEING SEEN?

WITHIN THE NEXT TWO WEEKS, EIGHT MORE SHIPS, FREIGHTERS AND LINERS, HAD VANISHED AND WERE "RANSOMED" BY THEIR OWNERS...

I'M STUMPED! WE DON'T HAVE ENOUGH MEN TO GUARD THE WHOLE WATER-FRONT! EVEN THE COAST GUARD CAN'T SEEM TO STOP THAT THIEF!

AND IF WE DO SUCCEED IN KEEPING HIM AWAY FROM THOSE SHIPS, I SUPPOSE HE'LL START STEALING TRUCKS OR...

...OR BUSES! I'D ALMOST FORGOTTEN THAT BUS DRIVER, RICK NOLAN! IS IT POSSIBLE HE WAS TELLING THE TRUTH AFTER ALL?

REMEMBER THE SCIENTIST HARSCH HE WAS TALKING ABOUT! WE TALKED TO HIM! HE LAUGHED WHEN WE MENTIONED ANTI-GRAVITY! I THINK NOLAN IS CONNECTED WITH THIS AT THAT! WE'LL HAVE A DRAGNET OUT FOR HIM!

RICK NOLAN HAD BEEN STAYING UNDER COVER BY DAY, HUNTING FOR SCIENTIST HARSCH BY NIGHT! THEN ONE NIGHT, RICK SPOTTED HIS QUARRY AND TRAILED HIM HOME THROUGH THE DARK...

VERY SOON, EMIL HARSCH WE'RE GOING TO HAVE A SHOWDOWN!

RICK STOLE STEALTHILY INTO THE DARKENED HOUSE, CREPT CAUTIOUSLY TOWARD A LIGHT COMING FROM THE SCIENTIST'S LAB...

HERE! WHAT IS THIS? GET OUT OF MY HOUSE BEFORE I CALL THE POLICE!

YOU DON'T RECOGNIZE ME EH? WE SPENT TWO WEEKS TOGETHER.. I WAS WEARING A BUS DRIVER'S UNIFORM THEN! AS FOR THE POLICE.. I'M GOING TO CALL THEM RIGHT NOW!

EMIL HARSCH MOVED WITH SURPRISING SWIFTNESS AS RICK DIALED POLICE HEADQUARTERS...

.. YES, THIS IS RICK NOLAN! I WANT TO TALK TO CHIEF FRANK BRENT... HEY!

YOU'RE BEING VERY TROUBLESOME MR NOLAN! I'VE HAD DETECTIVES HERE QUESTIONING ME! OF COURSE I TOLD THEM THE MERE IDEA OF AN ANTI-GRAVITY MACHINE IS ABSURD!

THERE CAME TEARING, GROANING, RIPPING SOUNDS AS THE SCIENTIST'S HOUSE TORE LOOSE FROM ITS FOUNDATION! RICK LEAPED TO THE MACHINE, DELIBERATELY FIRED... SHOT AT THE DESCENT SWITCH...

YOU STUPID FOOL! WE'LL NEVER GET DOWN TILL I REPAIR THAT SWITCH! IT'LL TAKE A YEAR!

A YEAR, EH? I HOPE YOU HAVE PLENTY OF FOOD, MR. HARSCH! YOU'RE GOING TO NEED IT!

W-WHAT DO YOU MEAN, I'M GOING TO NEED IT? I DO HAVE ENOUGH FOOD AND WATER TO LAST MORE THAN A YEAR.. B-BUT WHAT ARE YOU UP TO?

THIS PARACHUTE IS JUST SOMETHING I HAD LEFT FROM THE WAR... A MEMENTO! I WAS IN THE PARATROOPS, MR. HARSCH.

DON'T TELL ON ME, NOLAN! I'LL PAY WHATEVER YOU ASK...!

RICK NOLAN WENT DIRECTLY TO POLICE HEADQUARTERS AND GAVE HIMSELF UP! DESPITE HIS INCREDIBLE STORY, THEY TOOK HIM TO THE SITE OF THE MISSING HOUSE THE NEXT MORNING..

THAT'S A HOUSE UP THERE ALL RIGHT! AND I SEE EMIL HARSCH!

CHIEF BRENT AND BUS COMPANY PRESIDENT PETERS TOOK TURNS LOOKING UP AT THE SPECK IN THE SKY...

WELL, WE'LL BE HERE TO NAB HARSCH WHEN HE COMES DOWN... IN A YEAR FROM NOW!

NOLAN, YOUR JOB IS STILL WAITING, IF YOU WANT IT! YOU'LL GET FULL BACK PAY... AND A GOOD RAISE! THAT'S THE ONLY WAY I CAN PROVE HOW SORRY I AM FOR NOT HAVING BELIEVED YOU

THE END

WHAT WAS HAPPENING TO HIM WAS UTTERLY IMPOSSIBLE... BUT IT WAS HAPPENING! AND THERE WAS ONLY ONE PERSON LEFT ON EARTH WHO MIGHT BE ABLE TO SOLVE...

MISTER MASON'S STRANGE PROBLEM

SOMEHOW, MASON MANAGED TO CONCENTRATE, TO PUT HIS ALARM ASIDE / TREMBLING, HE BEGAN ...

YOU DON'T KNOW... IT'S BEEN A NIGHTMARE! EVER SINCE THAT NIGHT IN INDIA! I WENT TO A PARTY, AND I MET SINGH...

MASON TALKED ON, AND LITTLE BY LITTLE KINGSLEY BEGAN TO PICTURE HOW IT HAD BEEN / HE COULD ALMOST SEE THE PARTY, THE FAKIR...

BRAVO! THESE FAKIRS CAN REALLY PERFORM SOME AMAZING FEATS, EH, MASON?

PARLOR TRICKS! SOMETIMES I WONDER WHY WE LET THESE FAKIRS INSULT OUR INTELLIGENCE WITH THEIR PHONY MAGIC!

YOU DO NOT BELIEVE IN MAGIC, SIR?

NOT YOUR KIND, THAT'S CERTAIN! I THINK YOUR TRICKS ARE CHILDISH AND POORLY DONE, AT THAT!

I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF THIS STUPIDITY! COME ON, LET'S ALL GO OUT ON THE TERRACE!

SIR PLEASE, YOU ARE FREE TO THINK WHAT YOU WISH, BUT PERHAPS THE OTHER GUESTS WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE REST OF MY...

TAKE YOUR HANDS OFF ME!

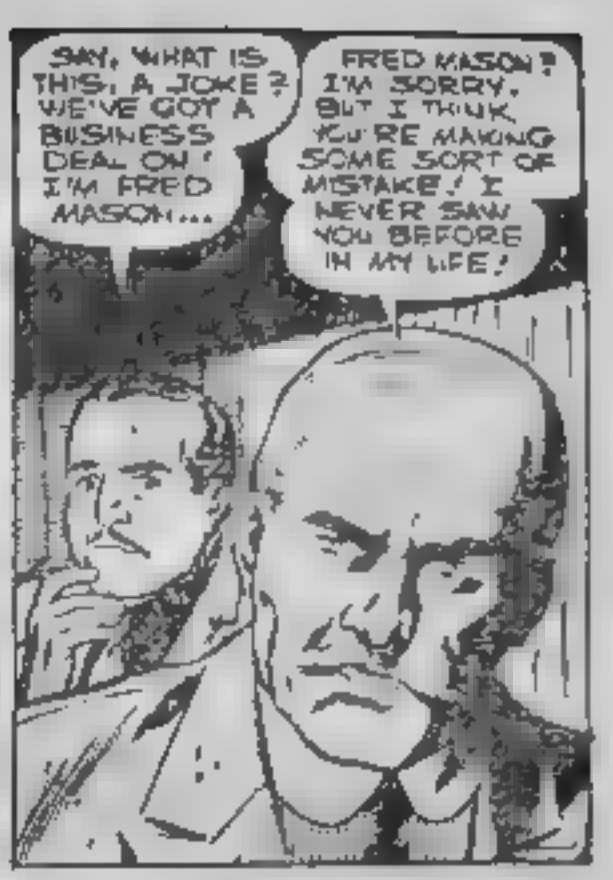
THERE HAD BEEN NO NEED TO STRIKE THE FAKIR! BUT MASON WAS LIKE THAT! HE WAS ARROGANT, BRUTAL ..

ANY MORE OBJECTIONS TO WHAT I SAY OR DO? IF YOU HAVE, JUST SPEAK UP!

MASON, LET HIM BE! THE MAN WAS JUST DOING WHAT HE WAS GETTING PAID TO DO! HE MEANT NO HARM!

I DON'T LIKE BEING MANHANDLED!

YOU WISH TO FIGHT, BUT I WILL NOT FIGHT YOU! THERE ARE OTHER WAYS TO PUNISH THOSE WHO NEED PUNISHMENT!



THAT WAS THE FIRST INCIDENT, BUT NOT THE LAST! THERE WERE OTHERS WHO HAD FORGOTTEN MASON...

AFTER A TIME, IT HAD BEEN AS IF MASON HAD TRULY CEASED TO BE! BUT NOW, ALL THAT WAS ENDED...

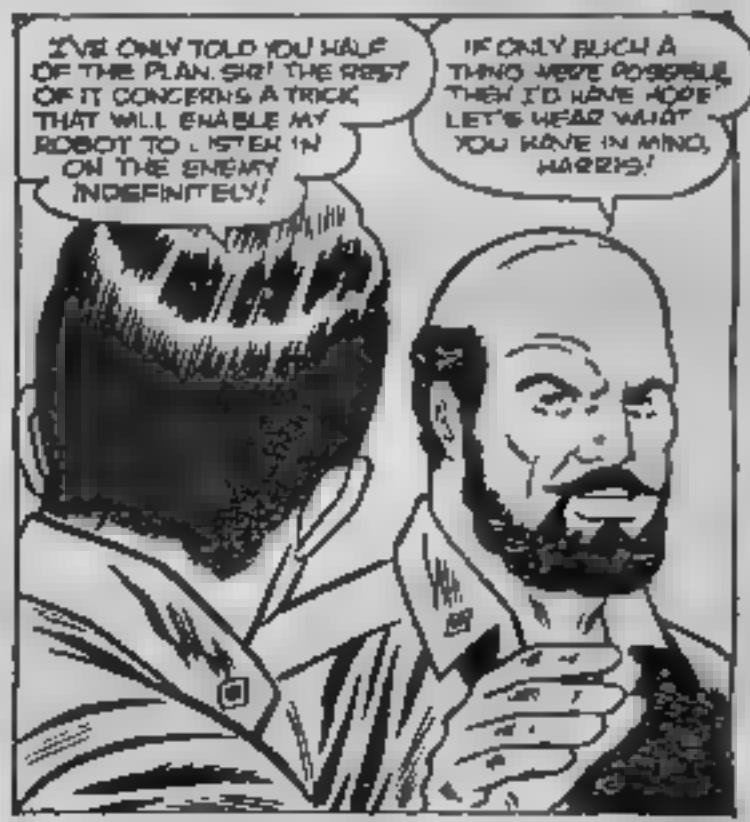
TRIUMPHANTLY, VENGEFULLY, MASON LEFT THE OFFICE! AH, HOW SINGH WOULD PAY! AND BEHIND, KINGSLEY SAT WONDERING.

SOMEWHERE MASON WAS SMILING! BUT ONLY BECAUSE HE WAS NOT THERE TO SEE THE SUDDEN BLANK LOOK ON KINGSLEY'S FACE, NOR TO HEAR KINGSLEY'S WORDS!

IT WAS 1984, AND IT APPEARED THAT THE WEST WAS DOOMED TO FALL INTO THE EVIL ORBIT OF THE MONSTROUSLY EVIL EAST! ONLY UNDER THIS DESPERATE SITUATION WOULD THE WEST CONSIDER HOWARD HARRIS'S FANTASTIC PLAN!

INSIDE THE IRON MAN

GENERAL MARTIN DALE RESPECTED HOWARD HARRIS AS AN INVENTOR BUT THE IDEA OF AN IRON SPY AT ONCE STRUCK HIM AS ALMOST CHILDISH...

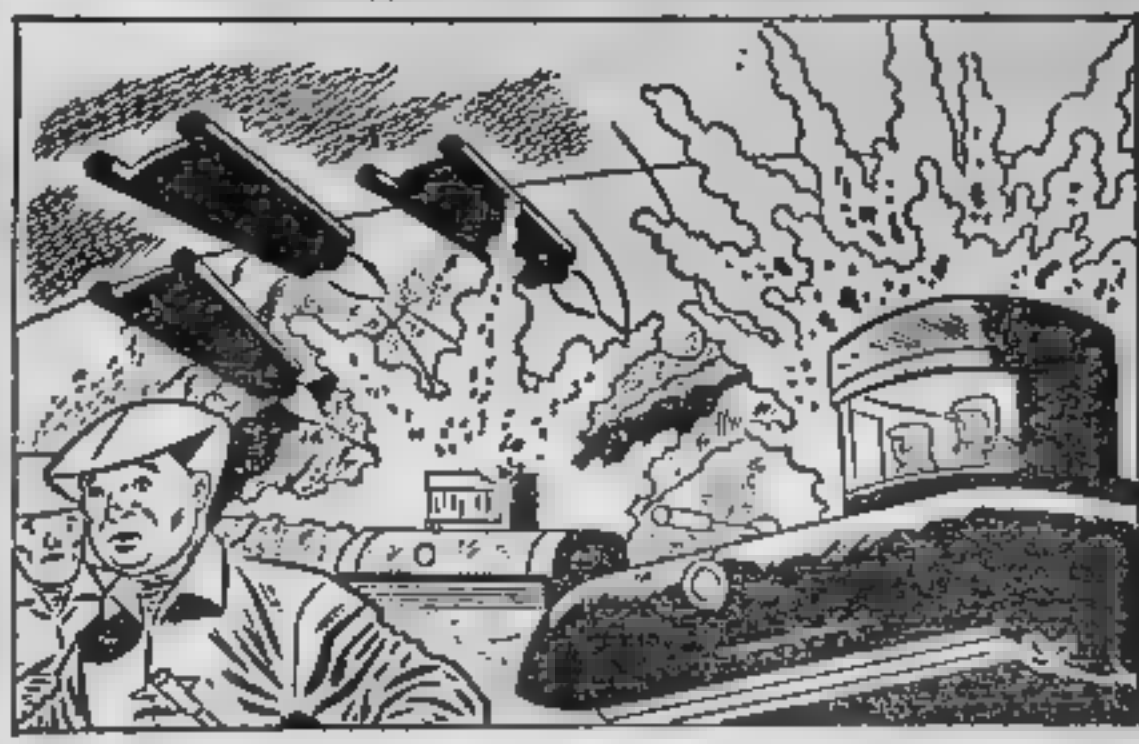


GENERAL DALE LISTENED TO HOWARD HARRIS'S STRANGE PLAN AND WAS FASCINATED BY IT! THAT SAME NIGHT, THE IRON MAN WAS SENT TO THE EAST BY GENERAL DALE HIMSELF...

THE ROBOT FOLLOWED A DIRECTIONAL BEAM TO SUBWAY MILITARY IT ALWAYS HEARD LATER! BACK AT WESTERN INTELLIGENCE, THE GENERAL AND HIS COMMAND COULD HEAR A MURMUR OF VOICES...

IN THE WEST GENERAL DALE AND OTHER INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS LISTENED WITH GROWING EXCITEMENT...

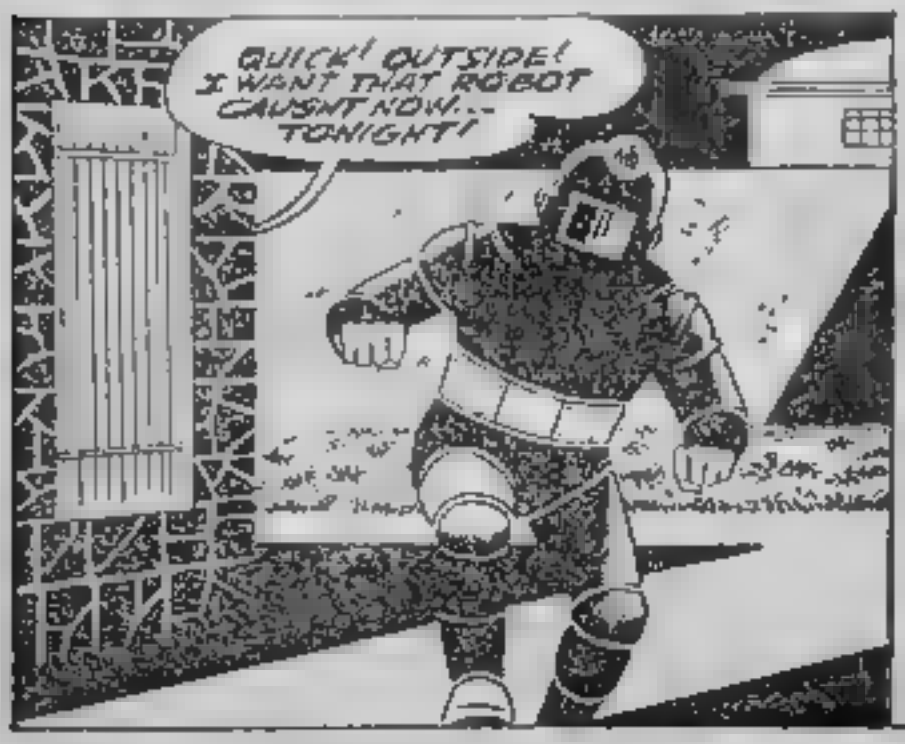
THE BIG ATTACKING FORCE OF THE EAST WAS CAUGHT COMPLETELY BY SURPRISE! THEY WERE MET BY SUPERIOR GROUND TROOPS, BOMBERS AND ESCORT FIGHTERS! IT WAS A SHATTERING DEFEAT FOR THE FORCES OF EVIL...



HOWARD HARRIS'S ROBOT DID ESCAPE DETECTION DURING THE NEXT WEEK! IT CONTINUED TO EAVESDROP ON EASTERN MILITARY PLANS, AND THE EAST KEPT MEETING WITH DEFEAT. THERE WAS GREAT CONSTERNATION IN THE HEADQUARTERS OF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GENERAL KUROV...

THE ASTONISHED OFFICER RUSHED OUTSIDE AND STARED WITH UNBELIEVING EYES...

FROM THE MOMENT THEIR ROBOT WAS CHALLENGED BY THE EAST'S SENTRY GENERAL DALE KNEW THAT HIS SPY WAS IN DANGER! IT WAS TO BE EXPECTED THAT THE ENEMY WOULD SET A TRAP...



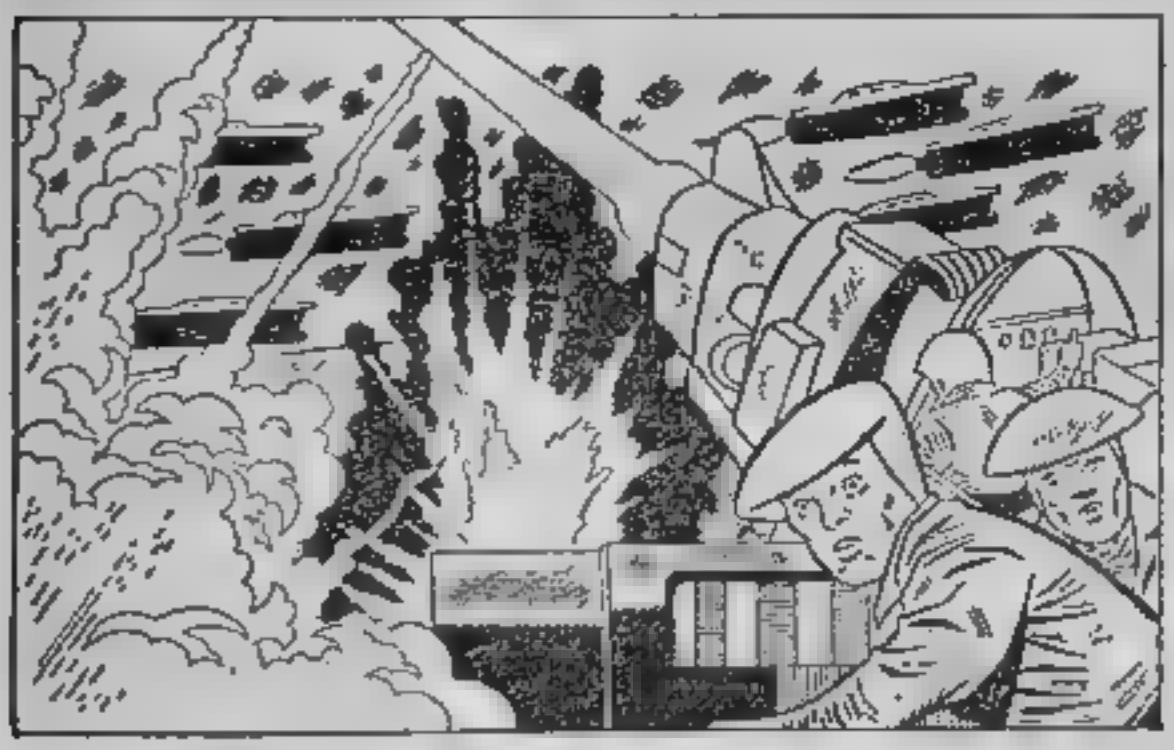
GENERAL KUROV'S SIMPLE SCHEME WORKED! THE ROBOT WAS MADE TO RETREAT WHEN THE COMMAND FROM HIS ARMORER WAS PICKED UP ON ITS TRANSMITTER. IT TUMBLED HEAVILY INTO A PIT PREPARED FOR IT...

A HALF HOUR LATER, GENERAL KUROV ORDERED THE ROBOT OPENED! HIS SUSPICIONS SEEMED WELL-FOUNDED...

HOWARD HARRIS WAS PLACED IN AN UNDERGROUND CELL UNDER HEAVY GUARD. THE MILITARY WAS TOO INVOLVED WITH MAKING PLANS FOR A QUICK AND VICTORIOUS END TO THE WAR TO PUT THE INVENTOR ON TRIAL AT ONCE...

GENERAL KUROV IGNORED THE IRON MAN IN THE CELLAR! WITH THE "REAL" SPY IN A PRISON FAR UNDERGROUND, THE EAST'S COMMANDER FELT SECURE ONCE MORE! HE HAD NOT COUNTED ON THE ROBOT'S AMPLIFIER TO PICK UP EVERYTHING HE SAID...

SO IT WAS THAT GENERAL MARTIN DALE ONCE AGAIN HEARD GENERAL KUROV'S PLAN OF ATTACK! AND BECAUSE THE EAST'S HEAVIEST CONCENTRATION OF PLANES WERE IN THE NORTH AND SOUTH, HE WAS EASY PREY FOR THE WEST'S AIR POWER!



THE ARMIES OF THE EAST WERE OVERWHELMINGLY DEFEATED! THE FORCES OF EVIL WERE AT LONG LAST FORCED TO SUE FOR PEACE! IT WAS UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER...

BUT WHAT OF THE IRON MAN'S INVENTOR? WAS HE REALLY A FORGOTTEN MAN, LEFT TO ROT IN THE ENEMY'S DARK DUNGEON? NOT AT ALL! IN FACT, HE WAS *NEVER THERE* TO BEGIN WITH! AFTER THE WAR, HE WAS HAILED AS A GREAT *HERO!*

AS FOR THE "HOWARD HARRIS" IN THE ENEMY DUNGEON... HE WAS JUST *ANOTHER ROBOT*, A *DECOY* THAT MADE THE EAST'S GENERAL KUROV *FORGET THE REAL SPY...* *THE IRON MAN!*

IT WAS A BAD NIGHT FOR DRIVING, DARK AND THREATENING, BUT WHEN A SALESMAN IS ON THE ROAD TIME MEANS EVERYTHING! I REMEMBER CHECKING MY SPEEDOMETER AS I APPROACHED THE TURN! THE RED HAND WAS QUIVERING JUST A SHADE UNDER SIXTY... AND THEN IT HAPPENED... IT WAS THEN THAT I SAW...

THE PASSENGER

OPENING THE REAR COMPARTMENT, I HAD JUST FOUND MY JACK AND WRENCH, WHEN I CAUGHT THIS SHUFFLING SOUND... THEN...

NEED A HAND, YOUNG FELLA?

WHA...?

GUESS I SCARED YOU THERE FOR A SECOND! DIDN'T MEAN TO!

I DON'T SCARE EASY, MISTER! IT'S JUST THE WAY YOU CREPT UP ON ME! I COULD'VE SWORN THERE WAS NO ONE AROUND FOR MILES!

YOU SAID SOMETHING ABOUT LENDING A HAND, AND THAT'S OKAY BY ME! HELP ME CHANGE THAT FRONT WHEEL, AND YOU'VE MADE YOURSELF A BUCK!

I DON'T WANT THE DOLLAR, MISTER... BUT I'LL HELP!

THE FACT HE DIDN'T WANT THE BUCK DIDN'T PHASE ME ANY! I EVEN FIGURED THAT IF HE WAS THAT MUCH OF A SAP, I'D LET HIM DO ALL THE WORK...

FROM THE DIRECTION YOU CAME OUT OF THE WOODS, I'D SAY YOU WERE COMING FROM POTSTOWN! THAT'S RIGHT, AIN'T IT?

NOT POTSTOWN, MISTER! I JUST CAME BACK FROM MARS!

Y-YOU DON'T MEAN MARS... THE PLANET?

NOTHING ELSE BUT, AND LET ME TELL YOU SOMETHING! THEY'RE WAY AHEAD OF US, TOO! THEY DON'T HAVE ANY TROUBLE WITH FLAT TIRES! MATTER OF FACT, THEIR CARS ARE POWERED WITH JET MOTORS!

I DIDN'T HAVE ANY DOUBTS NOW! THE GUY WAS AS CRAZY AS A LOON! DIMLY, I REMEMBERED READING SOMETHING, THAT THE BEST WAY TO HANDLE A CRACKPOT WAS TO AGREE WITH ANYTHING THEY SAID.

WOULD YOU CARE TO HEAR MORE ABOUT MARS? OR MAYBE YOU'D LIKE TO KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT SATURN OR VENUS? I'VE BEEN TO MOST OF THEM!

I CERTAINLY WOULD! ONLY I'M IN AN AWFUL HURRY TO MAKE MY NEXT STOP! THANKS A LOT FOR THE HELP!

BUT AS I WAS ABOUT TO CLIMB IN, HE PUT HIS THIN HAND ON MY ARM...
WOULD IT BE ALL RIGHT IF I RODE ALONG? THAT SPACE TRAVEL REALLY TIRES ME OUT!
I'M ONLY GOING ABOUT EIGHT MILES! IF IT'LL MAKE THAT MUCH DIFFERENCE, I SUPPOSE IT'S ALL RIGHT!

WE DROVE FOR A FEW MINUTES IN SILENCE, BUT WHEN I GLANCED HIS WAY I FELT SILLY ABOUT HAVING BEEN AFRAID! HE WAS A DILLY ALL RIGHT, BUT HE WAS ALSO A BAG OF BONES! I COULD'VE BROKEN HIM APART WITH ONE HAND...

HE WAS THAT HARMLESS! I DECIDED TO KILL THE TIME WITH A FEW LAUGHS...
THAT SPACE TRAVEL REALLY GETS ME, PAL! HOW'D YOU GO ABOUT IT?
TO PUT IT SIMPLY, YOU MIGHT CALL IT A KIND OF THOUGHT TRANSFERENCE! I CONCENTRATE ON THE PLACE I WANT TO GO, AND THAT'S ABOUT IT! NATURALLY, IT PLACES A STRAIN ON THE ENTIRE BODY!

I SURE WISH I COULD GET AROUND LIKE THAT! I'D LIKE NOTHING BETTER THAN A TRIP TO PLUTO! MAYBE I COULD SELL 'EM MY LINE OF HARDWARE! OPEN UP A WHOLE NEW MARKET!
NOT ON PLUTO YOU COULDN'T! IT'S A DEAD PLANET... NO LIFE AT ALL! I KNOW, BECAUSE I'VE BEEN THERE BEFORE!

JUST THE SAME, I'D STILL LIKE TO SEE A REAL DEAD PLANET LIKE PLUTO! YOU COULDN'T ARRANGE TO TAKE A PASSENGER ALONG, COULD YOU?
I HAVEN'T IN THE PAST, BUT I THINK IT WOULD WORK OUT! IF YOU WANT TO PLACE YOUR HAND IN MINE, WE COULD GIVE IT A TRY!

BUT WHEN OUR HANDS TOUCHED, A VIBRATING SENSATION STREAKED THROUGH MY BODY, AND A PULSATING FLASH OF LIGHT HAD A BLINDING EFFECT...

SECONDS LATER, THE FLASH SUBSIDED...AND THEN I WAS UPRIGHT IN THE CAR! A SURGING WAVE OF TERROR CHOKED THE WORDS IN MY THROAT...

T-THIS PLACE! THOSE STRANGE MOUNTAINS! I...IT CAN'T BE!

I SCRAMBLED OUT OF THE CAR! I HAD TO BE SURE...

THIS IS IT! I'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE! I'VE GOT TO GET BACK!

I HAD SEEN ALL I CARE TO! I DASHED BACK TO THE CAR AND GRABBED HIM BY THE COAT...

THIS IS PLUTO! IT'S A DEAD WORLD JUST LIKE YOU SAID! YOU BROUGHT ME HERE, NOW TAKE ME BACK! GET ME BACK TO EARTH!

SURE, I'LL TAKE YOU BACK... JUST THE WAY YOU CAME! JUST PUT YOUR HAND ON MINE, AND...

...MY HEART! THE STRAIN ON MY BODY... TOO MUCH... I'M... ARRRGH!

HE'S DEAD! I'M ALONE ON A DEAD PLANET! I'LL NEVER GET BACK TO EARTH!

NEVER!

THE END

EACH TIME THE PHONE RANG, PART OF HAL TERRENCE DIED! WHY SHOULD A WEALTHY, SELF ASSURED TOP FLIGHT ADVERTISING EXECUTIVE TREMBLE AND PANIC AT THE SOUND OF A TELEPHONE? WHAT WAS THIS FRIGHTENED MAN'S TERRIBLE SECRET?

DON'T ANSWER the PHONE!

NERVOUS FINGERS DROPPED THE PHONE AS IF IT WERE A RED-HOT COAL...

HAL, ARE YOU LISTENING...? (CLICK!)

N-NO, IT CAN'T BE! BUT THAT VOICE WAS UNMISTAKABLY *HERS*! HOW... HOW IN THE WORLD IS THAT POSSIBLE?

A QUICK DRINK RESTORED HIS NERVE ENOUGH TO REPLACE THE PHONE...

NOW I'M SORRY I DIDN'T FIND OUT WHO IT REALLY WAS! FUNNY HOW THE MIND CAN PLAY TRICKS! IT COULD HAVE BEEN ANY ONE OF A DOZEN WOMEN I KNOW! BUT THAT VOICE...? PROBABLY NERVES...GOT TO GET MORE REST!

THE NEXT MORNING IT WAS ALL BUT FORGOTTEN IN THE HECTIC STRAIN OF A BIG BUSINESS CONFERENCE...

AND YOU THINK YOU CAN BRING OUR VOLUME UP 25%, MR. TERRENCE?

I'LL GO SO FAR AS TO *GUARANTEE* IT! LOOK AT THESE FIGURES ON A SIMILAR PROMOTION DEAL! IN THREE MONTHS WE DID BETTER THAN A 55% INCREASE!

WELL, I'M ABOUT SOLD ON THIS, MR. TERRENCE! BUT WE'LL WANT YOU TO HANDLE THIS ACCOUNT, PERSONALLY! WHAT DO YOU SAY?

EXCUSE ME, JUST ONE MOMENT, MR. WINSTON!

MR. TERRENCE SPEAKING! WHO IS THIS?

IT'S YOU, HAL! I RECOGNIZE THAT BIG EXECUTIVE BOOM! GOT A BIG DEAL ON, HAVEN'T YOU?

IN A FLASH, ALL THE COLD ALARM OF THE NIGHT BEFORE WAS RELIVED...

NO, NO, IT CAN'T BE TRUE! I WON'T LET THIS HAPPEN TO ME!

WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU? WHAT'S WRONG?

HAL'S CONTROL WAS COMPLETELY SNAPPED, AND MOMENTS LATER...

I'M AFRAID YOU OWE US AN APOLOGY FOR YOUR OUTRAGEOUS BEHAVIOR BEFORE WE CAN EVEN DISCUSS BUSINESS AGAIN! LET'S GO, GENTLEMEN!

ALL RIGHT, THEN! I DON'T NEED YOUR ACCOUNT! GET OUT AND LEAVE ME ALONE!

TRYING TO FORGET, HAL SOUGHT THE COMPANY OF BEAUTIFUL WOMEN...

I'M HAVING A GLORIOUS TIME, HAL! AREN'T YOU?

YES, VIVIAN! IT'S BEEN PERFECT, AND ALL BECAUSE OF YOU!

FOR ME? BUT WHO WOULD KNOW THAT I'M *HERE*?

I DON'T KNOW, SIR. BUT THE PARTY ASKED FOR MR. HAL TERRENCE!

HAL, WHY DIDN'T WE EVER HAVE SUCH GOOD TIMES TOGETHER?

OH, NO, NO! THIS CAN'T GO ON!

HAL, WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU? WHERE ARE YOU GOING? IF YOU WALK OUT ON ME NOW, IT'S ALL OVER BETWEEN US!

WHY CAN'T I HAVE ANY PEACE?

WORK WAS IMPOSSIBLE! NO DAY PASSED WITHOUT THE STRIDENT SCREAM OF THE PHONE ECHOING IN HIS EARS...

THERE IT IS AGAIN! I'VE DONE EVERYTHING! THE NUMBER WAS CHANGED TWICE AND *STILL* IT RINGS! I WON'T ANSWER! I WON'T...BUT I CAN'T HELP MYSELF...I MUST!

LYDIA, PLEASE LEAVE ME ALONE! YOU'RE DRIVING ME OUT OF MY MIND! HAVE PITY ON ME!

DID *YOU* HAVE PITY ON *ME*, HAL?

HAL FLED HIS HOME, HIS BUSINESS, IN DESPERATION! IN A DISTANT CITY, SEVERAL DAYS LATER...

YOU'RE ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN I WON'T BE DISTURBED?

I GIVE YOU MY WORD! THERE IS NO PHONE IN YOUR SUITE AND THERE ISN'T ONE ON THIS ENTIRE FLOOR! YOU'LL HAVE PERFECT QUIET, MR. TERRENCE!

BUT AN HOUR LATER, JUST AS HAL HAD STARTED TO RELAX...

THE STEPS WERE PAINFUL AND STEEP BUT IT WAS THE ONLY PATH HAL COULD TRAVEL...

AS THE TORTURED CONFESSIONAL NEARED ITS END, SUDDENLY THE PHONE RANG...

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